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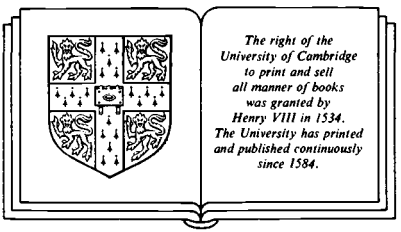
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LATIN AMERICA AND THE COMINTERN 1919–1943

To my brother Francisco Rafael,
whose generosity helped
to make mine a
real youth

LATIN AMERICA AND THE COMINTERN 1919–1943

MANUEL CABALLERO
Universidad Central de Venezuela



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Contents

Acknowledgements *page* vii

Abbreviations ix

Introduction 1

PART ONE THE WORLD COMMUNIST PARTY

1 The Communist International in history 7

2 Latin America in the Comintern 25

3 The Comintern in Latin America 43

PART TWO THE THEORY COMES AFTER

4 The discovery of America 65

5 Latin America in the world revolution 76

6 Power as theory 97

PART THREE THE QUESTION OF POWER

7 The assault 'from outside': the *pronunciamiento* of Luis Carlos Prestes 109

8 The taking 'from inside': national union 121

9 The last step: Browderism 134

Conclusion 149

Appendix: *dramatis personae* 156

Commentary on sources 164

Notes 170

Bibliography 196

Index 206

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December 1985 MANUEL CABALLERO

Abbreviations

ANL (or NLA)	National Liberation Alliance (Aliança Nacional Libertadora)
ASMOB	Archivio Storico del Movimiento Operaio Brasiliano
COMINTERN (or CI)	Communist (or Third) International (Kommunisticheskii Internatsional)
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International
IC	Internacional Comunista (Communist International)
ICC	International Control Commission
INPRECORR	International Press Correspondence
SSA	South American Secretariat (Secretariado Sudamericano de la Internacional Comunista)
USANA	United States of America National Archives

Introduction

The history of the Communist International in Latin America has been usually studied as the simple political or even institutional history of the individual Communist parties. That kind of work can be very useful, but it does not lend itself to an understanding of the *differentia specifica* of a Communist Party with reference to any other party. That is, the difference which comes from its international character, its centralized organization and, above all, its ultimate aim – world revolution. To study the Comintern taking this as a point of departure allows the investigator not only to capture more easily its organization on a continental scale, but also facilitates an analysis of the role and the significance of the Communist International in twentieth-century world history.

The leaders of the Third (Communist) International (1919–43) never appeared to believe seriously that a Leninist revolution (a Socialist revolution in their own language) could triumph in Latin America before it did in Europe or the larger Asian countries. The Comintern was created in March 1919 to complete on a worldwide scale the revolutionary process started a year before in Russia. Lenin and his comrades conceived the world revolution as a fire which, having been set alight first in Russia, would spread to Western Europe, fanned by the impending victory of the German revolution (in spite of the failure of the Spartakist uprising of November 1918). In 1920, the Comintern turned its attention to Asia, and some of its leaders expressed the idea that the world revolution might in fact start there instead of in Europe. But the Latin American Leninists were doomed to play the role of 'supporters' of the world revolution, to buttress the struggle of the European and Asian revolutionary working classes. If Moscow was the centre of the world revolution, Latin America was on the periphery, perhaps exceeded only by Africa. In the pyramidal world structure of the Comintern, Latin America was located at the bottom.

Nonetheless, the influence of the Third International in Latin America was more pervasive and, in the theoretical realm, more longlasting than in many countries of Europe and Asia, certainly more so than in the United States of America whose working class and Communist Party were destined by the Leninists to lead the Socialist revolution in the whole Western hemisphere. Latin Americans founded relatively important Communist parties much before some of their European and Asian comrades. The Communists launched insurrections in El Salvador and in Brazil in the 1930s, and entered the governments of Cuba, Ecuador, and Chile in the 1940s. All of this took place before similar activities and advances were undertaken or achieved in most European and Asian countries. The slogans of the Third International, its appraisal of the Latin American continent and its revolutionary possibilities, have set the tone for long theoretical discussions on the left and beyond, in a process which led the Cuban Revolution to proclaim itself Leninist, twenty years after the dissolution of the International which Lenin had founded.

Of course, it is easy to attribute such developments to the military, industrial and political influence of the Soviet Union. It is very difficult, indeed, to separate Communism from the Soviet Union. But to explain the former by means of the latter is to ignore the fact that the influence of the October Revolution in Europe, Asia and Latin America preceded the transformation of the Soviet Union into a world power. To say that this influence is due to the attraction of Marxism, particularly among intellectuals, is to ignore that what seduced them was not only Marxism as an explanation of world historical processes but also, and perhaps mainly, Leninism as a theory and a method of bringing about revolution. Leninism is so closely related to the existence of the Communist Party, and the Party to the existence of the Communist International, that to ignore the existence of the latter is to distort the understanding of contemporary world history, particularly between World Wars I and II.

In the same manner, it might be tempting for a Latin American to explain the presence of Leninism in the area by the existence of the Cuban revolutionary government. But that is also an oversimplification, for its influence is previous to 1959, even in Cuba. Moreover, Latin America is the continent which the Soviet Union, understandably, has always had more difficulty in reaching (or 'infiltrating'), in terms of intervening directly in the internal affairs of the individual countries. Before World War II, these difficulties were even greater. Nevertheless, although exaggerated by anti-Communist propaganda, the presence

(not to mention influence) of Leninism in Latin America in the inter-war years was real. This presence was manifested, with differing degrees of success, through the Communist Parties – through the Communist International.

Thus, the history of the Comintern in Latin America is closely associated with the history of revolutionary movements in the area during most of the twentieth century. However, what has been said about the Comintern as a world organization can also be applied to its history in Latin America. That is, the paradoxical situation that in spite of having been the most important international revolutionary organization in this century and possibly in history, it has been so little studied. Perhaps the main reason is that historians are wary either of the secrecy connected with the Comintern's archives in Moscow or of the underground character of most of its activities. A study of this kind must then begin with an analysis of the central points in the history of the International in order to describe how the primary and ultimate aim of world revolution conditioned not only the peculiar inner structure of the Comintern, but also the periodization of its own history. Part One of this work attempts such an analysis, complementing it with chapters which examine the central headquarters of the Latin American Comintern, and its sections active in the southern half of the Western hemisphere.

Part Two deals with the main theoretical problems confronted by the Comintern: the definition of those societies from the Marxist (and Leninist) point of view; the kind of revolution they needed in the context of world revolution; the theoretical aspects of the approach to power, and particularly the protagonists of that process. That the study of these questions follows the formation of the Comintern sections is due to two facts. First, the Comintern did not conceive of itself as a 'loose propaganda association' (Zinoviev), but as a practical tool for exporting the Russian Revolution; thus, its first objective was to provoke revolutions all over the world and then, only then, to develop theories about them. Second, Latin America was not 'discovered' (to use its own expression) by the Comintern until 1928, nine years after its foundation.

Part Three studies the problems related to the main challenge confronted by any political party: the question of power. Chapters 7, 8 and 9 show how the problem was dealt with in practical terms: 'from outside', with the *pronunciamiento* of Prestes in Brazil in 1935; 'from inside', with the class collaboration, National Union policies which eventually flowed into what was called 'Browderism', otherwise self-dissolution.

The greatest difficulty in a study of this kind is in access to the sources, and also in the different circumstances which help to obscure their critical evaluation. These are in turn closely linked to the general problems of working on a subject of contemporary history and moreover, one which is so polemical. Therefore, a detailed commentary on sources precedes the bibliography. In the Appendix, the chief Latin American *dramatis personae* of the Comintern are presented, in short biographical notes.

PART ONE

The World Communist Party

1

The Communist International in history

The importance of being Third

The First and Second Internationals were not real ones, but a federation of groups and parties. For Lenin, the Third International had to be in earnest – it had to be a real party. It was, and it survived for twenty-four years. Being the Third, it was also the most important.

Just as it is impossible to study twentieth-century history without referring sooner or later to the Russian Revolution, it is also impossible to understand its development without understanding the ubiquitous role of the Communist Party. Even if the Soviet Union had wanted the revolution to remain only a national uprising confined to the boundaries of the ancient Tsardom of All the Russias, the huge extent of its land, not to mention other elements, would have given in any case an international dimension to the process. But the confessed internationalism of the Bolsheviks added a particular dynamism to what, as with all revolutions, was dynamic in itself: the Russian outburst was not only the *Russian* Revolution, but the starting point of world revolution. The Bolshevik Party was not only a Russian party, but the embryo of the World Communist Party. This World Communist Party was named the Communist International (Comintern) and it was not conceived as a loose federation of national parties, but as a single body, centrally organized and, in fact, *one* party.[1]

Such a party governing such a country and with such an aim, naturally provoked strong reactions, both positive and negative. On the one hand, its appeal reached the most radical sectors of the working class, the Socialist movement, as well as the colonial peoples; on the other, both the 'bourgeois'[2] and social-democratic governments had to react against such a movement which so openly confessed to be 'digging the grave' for them.

Given those conditions, it is also almost impossible to understand the

history of the twentieth century without referring sooner or later to the existence during nearly a quarter of a century of the World Communist Party, the Third (Communist) International, the Comintern.[3] The biggest revolution in history, at least in terms of the number of people affected, the Chinese Revolution, was launched under the banner of the Comintern and even directly (and unsuccessfully) led by it for a while. The Comintern was directly involved in one of the longest colonial wars of this century, the Vietnam war. Tito, Dimitrov, Gottwald and Pieck, before becoming the leaders of their respective countries, belonged to the highest levels of the International. Three victorious counter-revolutions, in Italy, Germany and Spain, were launched against 'international Communism', and the alliance of Germany and Italy with Japan was called the 'Anti-Komintern Pact.'

Thus, the importance of the Comintern in the evolution of the contemporary history of Europe as well as Asia is hardly to be denied. But, in America? In the United States, the section of the Communist International never achieved much importance, even though at the beginning it attracted some 'wobblies' (as the members of the anarcho-syndicalist trade union 'Industrial Workers of the World' were called); and in the twenties and thirties it influenced some very important writers and artists. Perhaps its greatest impact was to have provided the raw material for the 'Big Red Scare' which haunted the American scene in the 1920s.

Meanwhile, in the 'other' America, the Third International had an importance which did not always correspond with the actual size of its sections, or with the abilities of their leaders. As a spectre – sometimes very useful – for some people, as a real and dangerous menace for others, as a hope for a handful, the Third International existed and acted with varying effectiveness in the political scene of Latin America.

As early as 1920, the theoretical organ of the Communist International was able to announce the publication of several Comintern-oriented periodicals in Argentina and, in a 1922 publication, to report the support that Chilean workers gave to Recabarren in his propaganda for the Comintern.[4] Even if they were scarcely more than cells, several Communist Parties of Latin America could claim to have been founded before most of the European sections and even before the most important of the Asian parties, the Chinese.

There was no Communist Party in Nicaragua, and presumably, no working class either. Nevertheless, in 1926, the United States government justified sending the marines to that country in order to counteract the subversion allegedly provoked and organized by the Third Inter-

national. The worldwide campaign in defence of Sandino had not only the vocal solidarity, but the real support of the Comintern and its front organizations, mainly the Brussels Anti-Imperialist League. The whole history of the Sandino uprising and the international campaign in its favour is filled with various alliances and splits between Communists and Nationalists. In Central America again, in 1932, Agustín Farabundo Martí, a confessed member of the Third International, launched what could be considered the first Communist insurrection in America. In Brazil in 1935, another insurrection, led this time by a member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, was launched and failed. In both Chile and Cuba, the national sections of the Comintern participated in victorious alliances or served as ministers in the government before the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943.

Nonetheless, perhaps the most profound and longlasting influence of the Third International in Latin America was in the theoretical realm. For several of those countries, Marxism or even Socialism arrived wrapped in Leninism not to say Stalinism.[5] From the beginning of the twenties, the entire Left had to define itself with regard to the Comintern, and the ideological struggle with the 'Cominternians' presided over the birth of such important non-Communist parties as the APRA in Peru and 'Democratic Action' of Venezuela.[6]

The extent of the theoretical influence of the Comintern was due not only to the fact of having 'imported' Marxism or Socialism into Latin America, but also to having provided a whole new way of defining the socio-economic and political problems of the area – and radical innovations for resolving them – through structural transformations which in essence were revolutionary. Thus, phrases such as 'semi-colonial and dependent countries', 'agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution' and even the idea of making revolutions through successive 'levels' (most of which were products of discussions inside the Comintern), became afterwards an important part of the theoretical background of the Left in Latin America.[7]

Given those circumstances, it becomes possible to extend to the Latin American history of this century what was previously said about world history of the time: that it is hardly understandable unless one takes into consideration the existence and the actions of the Communist International. Furthermore, no history of ideas in the twentieth century can be written in Latin America nowadays without taking into consideration not only Marxism as a general school of thought, but the particular developments of this theory which are owed to the Comintern.

General problems of the research

Any research concerning the history of the Comintern in Latin America will encounter obstacles and difficulties that although inter-related, can be separated into two categories: political and scientific. The first is a more general one, related to the kind of reactions that Communism provokes everywhere. It is not very likely that someone could be neutral regarding such a party. Thus, for most people, to choose such a subject implies necessarily that the researcher has made an *a priori* choice: he must be writing a paper *for* or *against*. In either case, the political obstacles are apparent, not only in terms of the researcher's interpretation as well as in his selection of material, but also in terms of the people who could help personally or institutionally in the research.

Currently, in most Latin American countries, the history of Communism in any period is a tabu subject which the military governments, the Right and the political establishment in general view with alarm, if not with open hostility. If this were not the case, party militants (whose help could be vital in terms of access to sources) would probably have a tendency to view the researcher in the worst light. Even in Cuba, a study of the Communist Party, particularly during its existence as a section of the Communist International, would encounter almost the same kind of political obstacles even though imposed for different reasons. In any case, the history of the Communist Parties in Latin America or even in a particular country could most easily be undertaken for the short period between the end of World War II and the beginning of the cold war, when almost all the Communist Parties of the area enjoyed a somewhat precarious status of toleration if not legal activity.[8]

Furthermore, even if the work of the researcher were seen at least with indifference by the political establishment, there would remain the obstacle of the difficulty of investigating the internal aspects of a party organized for working in the secrecy of the underground, as was the case of the Communist Party and, *a fortiori*, of an international organization whose mere existence broke with all the current diplomatic rules of the game. Additionally, the activities of the Communist International were at the same time the necessarily well-kept secrets of an underground international organization and the state secrets of a big country, a world power. Communist propaganda during the existence of the Comintern drifted between Charybdis and Scylla: they wanted to recognize with pride that they belonged to a single world party whose headquarters were in Moscow, and at the same time they violently rejected the attacks of their opponents who suggested that the 'hand of Moscow' (that is the

capital city of a foreign country) was behind each and every one of their actions.

What could be called the scientific obstacles to this work are not different in kind to those just mentioned. The first one is that the archives of the Comintern are held in Moscow in the utmost secrecy. They are closed both to friends and foes and in fact may have been destroyed.[9] Moreover, as long as the successive governments of the Soviet Union continue to claim that they are the heirs of Lenin's legacy, it will not be easy to predict when, if ever, those archives will be opened. For it would be no easy matter to claim that the Soviet government is and has always been devoted to peaceful coexistence and non-intervention in the internal affairs of foreign countries and at the same time show, through documentation in the Comintern archives, how and when the leaders of the party-state encouraged and organized attempts to overthrow governments of other countries. This problem of archives is also encountered when studying the history of each section of the Comintern. The third of the '21 conditions' that a party had to fulfil to be accepted into the International, was the setting up of a parallel organizational apparatus, that is, an underground one.[10] Naturally, an illegal apparatus does not, or should not, have archives. In the case of Latin America, most of the Comintern sections came into being as underground organizations and remained as such for a long time.[11] So, it is easily understandable that people who mature in such an ambiance usually maintain the habits of secrecy, reject the idea of having archives and are even less interested in publishing them or opening them to strangers.[12] All this can be applied, to some extent, to any kind of documents which might show the link between a party or a group of parties with an international command centre.

There is a second kind of problem which is linked with the particular conception that both Soviet leaders and Communists everywhere had about their own history – what Trotsky called 'the Stalinist school of falsification', that is, the need for history to be re-written at every tactical turning point, in order to erase every disgraced leader from it.[13]

Furthermore, to join a party such as the Communist Party implied a commitment somewhat akin to a religious belief. This mystical aspect of political activism included initiation and excommunication, and of course produced heretics, apostates and the damned. In those circumstances, for a party or an individual leader to question their own history was a daunting proposal. Thus, there are few, if any, memoirs of militants that would be very useful for the historian. And those written by ex-Communists, particularly in the years of Comintern activity, were

done in the bitter style of the deceived and thus were received with the hatred that militants reserved for renegades.[14]

Even if it were possible to overcome all the preceding obstacles, the immensity of the task remains. To write a real history of the Communist movement in such a large area as Latin America, to penetrate (or merely try to) the dense screen of an activity obscured by its clandestine condition, by passion and lies, is an extremely difficult enterprise for a single researcher. Moreover, given the small size of most of the Communist Parties of the area during the Comintern period, it might be tempting to ask if it were worth the effort.

Although difficult, it is not impossible to undertake such a task and to succeed in obtaining useful results. The researcher has to avoid, however, two possible temptations in his work. The first is that of trying to write the history of the individual Communist Parties, tying them together afterwards, since the results would be, as they have been so far, an endless collection of narrative histories, which border on the anecdotal. The second is to undertake some kind of 'inner' or 'secret', or 'hidden' history of the relations of the Latin American sections with the Comintern. Given the present state of sources, the result might well be, as it has been so far, a polemical and above all unverifiable collection of innuendos.

On the other hand, two facts help the work of the historian. The first is that of the organization of the Comintern itself. It had a rigidly centralized structure, had moreover the character of a closed institution, with well-defined boundary lines and had, to a certain extent, its own life, independent of that of its national sections and their political and social backgrounds. These aspects permit, as Aldo Agosti points out, a relatively greater autonomy of what he calls the 'institutional' history of the Comintern, which he sees as richer and easier to study than that of the Second International.[15]

The second fact, perhaps more important, is linked with the class origin of the leadership of the Latin American Comintern sections and also with their already mentioned condition as 'pioneers' of Marxism in many countries of the area. The founders of the Latin American Communist parties were not workers but radical petty-bourgeois[16] and those parties then, instead of being considered (as Hobsbawm says of the British party), as a 'chip' of the working class and its history, should be considered as 'off-spring' of the *intelligentsia*. They were the first mass propagandists of Socialism and Marxism; their ideas became the centre of the theoretical discussions of the Left and the radical fringes; their greater and longlasting influence has been in the theoretical realm; all

these are aspects which may facilitate the study of the Comintern in Latin America from the ideological viewpoint.[17]

One could say that, given these conditions, what is left for the historian is the possibility of writing, so to speak, an 'external' history of the Comintern which would cover practically none of the internal aspects of the organization, which are perhaps the more interesting; and thus, the resulting work would be inconclusive. Two opposed factions would be rather sceptical of the results of such a study. The first are those who consider the Comintern only as the long arm of the Kremlin, as a Machiavellian conspiracy aimed at overthrowing all governments outside Russia and above all, as an organization which was a master of disguise, whose angelic appearance and words hid its fiendish deeds. The second are those who, on the other hand, see the Comintern only as the untainted and chivalrous weapon of the working class to liberate the entire world from its chains, and whose deeds and words were nothing less than Holy Writ, Book of Revelations.

The fact happens to be that the Comintern *was* an international conspiracy for overthrowing all governments outside Russia; that its aims and those of the Soviet government were so exactly the same that it was quite impossible not to think that the one was a tool in the hands of the other. The leaders of the Comintern were Machiavellians indeed. But their Machiavellianism has to be understood *stricto sensu*: Leninism is less an original reflection on *fini* than an accurate codification of *mezzi*. Marx, at the end of the *Manifesto*, boasted of doing what Machiavelli did: he disdained concealing Communist views and aims. Lenin did the same, writing what could be considered his *Principe*: the pamphlet *Left-wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*. The Italian Leninist, Gramsci, called his party 'the Prince of modern times', which was not only a way of dodging censorship, but also a definition Lenin would not perhaps have refused to recognize.

Leninists and Stalinists were not the prophets of a New and Revealed Truth, and they affected not to believe in any Revelation, but the fact is that they behaved in a way that Hobsbawm finds unprecedented, among secular movements: 'the passionate and total loyalty which individual communists felt to their cause, which was equated to their party, which in turn meant loyalty to the Communist International and the USSR'.[18] Due to these quasi-religious beliefs, as well as their Machiavellian character, they did not perhaps feel the necessity (or they could not understand the necessity) of concealing *how*, as well as *what* they had the intention of obliterating.

What was the Comintern?

Any study of the Third International in a particular area, as well as in a particular period or with reference to a particular policy, can hardly be done without taking into consideration the very specific shape of the organization, its verticality, its centralization and its discipline. But a simple description of the internal structure is not very useful for understanding the influence of the central bodies over their 'soldiers' everywhere. Nor can the idealism or the fanaticism of the latter alone explain how an international organization could be capable of maintaining such a state of tension among militants for such a long period (punctuated with bloody defeats, as in China in the twenties, Germany and Spain in the thirties). Neither aspect can be explained without referring to the constant relationship between national interests and the aim of world revolution. Thus, in order to understand the decisions and actions of the Comintern, one must take into consideration not only local situations, but Soviet national interests and the progress of world revolution in other areas. When studying these issues, it is necessary to keep in mind the concept of the sum and its parts, lest one commit the error of being either too speculative or too descriptive.

What was the more general political objective of the Comintern? To assume that it was the triumph of Socialism or Communism does not permit it to be differentiated from the Second or First Internationals, and the difference was something that Lenin wanted to make very clear. Thus, he himself wrote that 'the most important principles' of the Communist International were 'the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet power'.[19] He introduced the theses which guided the foundation of the Third International by saying that they were nothing new, being only the extension to a number of European countries of the cardinal lessons of the Russian Revolution.[20] On writing that, he did nothing more than quote his own words in *Left-wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*.[21] The statutes of the Communist International contained the same idea in the following terms:

> It is the aim of the Communist International to fight by all available means, including armed struggle, for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and for the creation of an international Soviet republic as a transitional stage to the complete abolition of the state. The Communist International considers the dictatorship of the proletariat the only possible way to liberate mankind from the horrors of capitalism. And the Communist International considers the Soviet power the historically given form of this dictatorship of the proletariat.[22]

In this paragraph, only one phrase is outside the tactical field: 'as a transitional stage to the complete abolition of the State'. It looks like an afterthought,[23] for the essential concern of the founders of the International was not propaganda about their theoretical objectives, the kind of society they had the intention of building, but the concrete action to overthrow capitalism.[24]

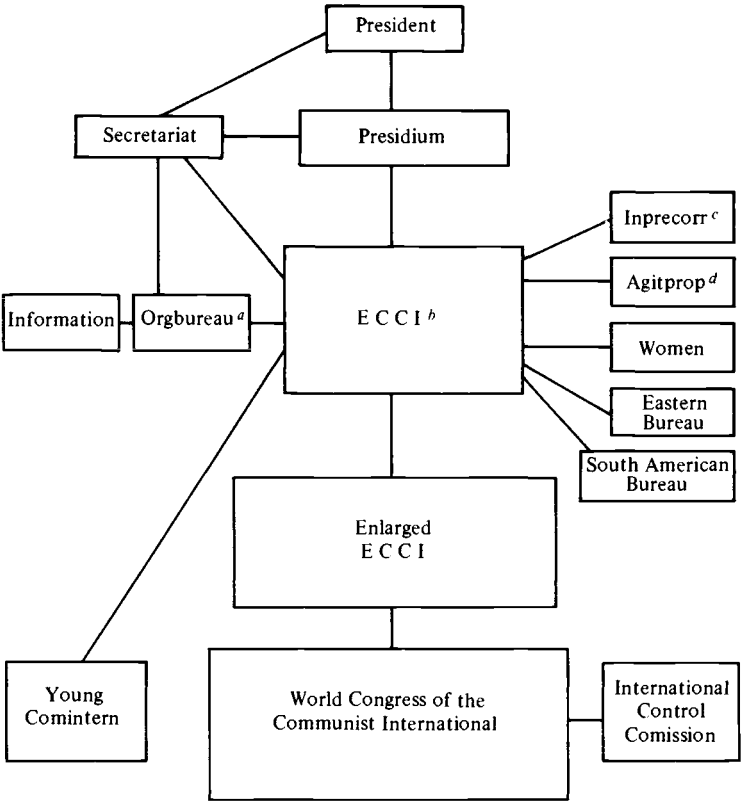
Thus, what was previously said about the Machiavellian character of the Comintern is clearly derived from the statutes themselves. As E. Ragionieri points out, the program of the International was created from its organizational and political theses, and from the directives or measures voted at each meeting of the successive congresses or the Executive Committee concerning individual sections which were (or so it was believed) on the eve of seizing power.[25] The more general concerns, the theoretical restlessness, came afterwards, when the Comintern felt that the revolutionary wave was ebbing.[26] Political and organizational theses, as conceived by the Comintern, are *mezzi*, not *fini*: the so-called theoretical discussions in the International were in fact very down-to-earth controversies about *how* to overthrow capitalism, not *why*. The program came last, as the 'Esortazione a liberare l'Italia da'barbari' came at the end of the *Principe*.

These principles, coupled with the particular circumstances of their origin, were to have an overwhelming influence on the entire history of the Comintern. For, with these conditions, as in Machiavelli, the criteria of political 'good' or 'evil' are related only to efficacy;[27] the most revolutionary party being that one which has seized power.[28] Thus, the concept of 'party-guide' would come; hence, there was no difference between Leninism and Stalinism, except that which derived from the strong personality of the two leaders of the Bolshevik Party during a half century.

Nevertheless, the Communist International was not a gathering of mere tacticians who invented *post factum* a theory to justify their deeds. As a matter of fact, the party-centre of the International, the Russian one, was created and led by intellectuals: Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin himself,[29] who were moreover deeply concerned with theoretical questions; Lenin and Bukharin wrote on philosophy and economics, Trotsky on literature, Stalin on national questions. Even the most brilliant tacticians could not hold the attention, the interest and the trust of so varied a following of intellectuals and workers around the world for as long a time as did Leninists, who were themselves anything but contemptuous of theory or more generally, of any kind of intellectual work.[30] But, even so, their

defiance of 'doctrinalism'[31] was always stronger than their warnings, also frequently repeated, against pure 'practicalism'. Upon consideration, it is easy to understand what Ragionieri meant when he spoke of the organizational thesis of the Comintern playing the role of a 'programme'.

Thus, the first feature of the Russian Revolution which had an international significance for Leninists was not just the general one on the role of the Bolshevik Party, but rather the particular shape of its organization. Not only the national sections, but the Comintern itself, had to have the structure that the Russian Party had, and that gave the following results:



a Organization Bureau
b Executive Committee of the Comintern
c International Press Correspondence
d Agitation and Propaganda Department

Formally, the leading organ of the Communist International was the World Congress, which elected the Executive Committee (the leading organ between Congresses), which then elected its Presidium and the President. Additionally, after the Fifth Congress, it also elected the International Control Commission, a body which dealt with disciplinary questions, as well as the auditing of the finances of the ECCI and its sections. The Congress was to meet yearly, the Executive Committee monthly, and the Presidium was in charge of the daily questions of the movement.

So far, this is the structure of a very centralized organization, but not necessarily a non-democratic one, less still anti-democratic, for since their sections had the same structure, the Congresses were their leading organs, too. Yet from the very beginning (not, as Trotskyites generally claim,[32] when Lenin died) some elements were added to this structure to make it a body whose 'regular channels' (to use a commonplace of its jargon) flowed only in one direction: from top to bottom, making the Comintern not merely a centralized organization, but a vertical one.

The first of those elements, voted in the Second Congress (1920) was that a particular vote in every congress would decide the number of votes that every section would have in that same congress. The second was to forbid binding mandates. Those decisions had the aim of crushing what was, for Leninists, the most despicable sin of the organization of the Second International – federalism. It could be said that these changes reinforced the power of the World Congresses and moreover, a binding mandate is not necessarily a democratic one. Yet the changes actually reinforced the power of the Executive Committee, because it had the best possibility of making an estimation of the strength of every section of the Comintern, and then proposing the votes that it could have. Thus, the way was clear for all kinds of manoeuvring, with the Executive Committee having in any case the last word.

The powers of the Executive Committee were quite extensive, for it was able not only to expell individuals from the International, but also entire sections, and to oppose a decision of their Central Committee or their Congress which might be seen as unorthodox; and even to dissolve a party.[33] At the Third Congress (1921), the possibility of co-opting new members to the ECCI was added to those huge powers. Even if this decision was a pale compromise compared with what had been proposed,[34] it converted the ECCI, in theory as well as in fact, into an anti-democratic, self-elected oligarchy.

This situation was made worse by the fact that, in the ECCI, the Russian Party also had the last word, not only because of its authority as

the only party which had led a victorious revolution; not only because of the possibility it had of using the resources of a big, albeit impoverished, country,[35] but because of the simple fact that from the beginning, it had the biggest bloc of votes in the ECCI.[36] When the Bolshevik Party lost its importance *vis-á-vis* the huge personal power of Stalin, after what Schapiro calls 'the victory of Stalin over the Party',[37] the congresses of the party also became less frequent, and its characteristic of a self-elected oligarchy was copied by all the sections of the Comintern.

The political meaning of 'periods' in the history of the Comintern

Very soon, the Comintern itself began to see its own different policies as simple 'periods' of a single program and of a single general trend, towards the victory of the world proletarian revolution. Its enemies and also some independent historians have a tendency to see in those periods either the reflection of the bitter and bloody struggle for power inside the Russian party, or the process of converting the Comintern into a shrinking appendage of the Soviet Foreign Office.

This classification of its own history into 'periods' by the Comintern was not done as a scholarly effort to make it clearer, but rather had a very important political significance. After a first period of wars and revolutions which ended in 1921, Capitalism entered a period of so-called 'stabilization' which could not last long, because it was doomed to enter sooner rather than later into the third period. Would the third period be the last period of Capitalism, that of the triumph of world revolution? That was implicit in the idea of a 'third' period following a period of stabilization. Nevertheless, the second period might well prove to be longer than the somewhat optimistic 'official' position in the Comintern had forecast. Thus, the coming of this third period became the point for dividing the Comintern into right and left wings, as did the question of the character of this period. Would this be one of revolutions? When Stalin imposed 'monolithism' both in the Russian party and the Comintern, this controversy was to result in successive, sinful and bloodily punished 'deviations'.

In 1928, in his first (and last) speech as Chairman of the Third International, Nikolai Bukharin took a gradualist approach which afterwards was used against him as proof of his shift to the 'right':

> The general appreciation on the whole of post-war developments must be divided into three periods. The first period was the period of acute revolution-

ary crisis, particularly in European countries. It was the period in which revolutionary development reached its highest stage, when an enormous revolutionary wave swept over the whole of Europe. The culminating point of this period was reached in the years 1920–1921 . . .

. . . The defeat of the proletariat in Western Europe served the bourgeoisie as the political starting point for further developments. Those defeats, and particularly the defeat of the German proletariat, marked the beginning of the *second* period of development in Central Europe and in Europe as a whole. This was the period of the capitalist offensive, the period of defensive proletarian struggles generally, and defensive strikes in particular. It was the period of the partial stabilization of capitalism . . .

. . . The second period passed away to give place to the *third* period, the period of capitalist reconstruction . . .[38]

Bukharin was not expounding personal views, for as Humbert-Droz recalls in his memoirs, this was the product of a long discussion in the Soviet Party.[39] Nevertheless, afterwards it was not only used against Bukharin, but, the vote of the Sixth Congress having maintained this idea of 'third' period, when Stalin turned to the left after disgracing Bukharin, this period was again conceived as a period of wars and revolutions.[40]

But this period of revolutions following wars never came – at least while the Comintern was still in existence. In spite of the severe crisis of 1929, what happened was not the triumph of one or several proletarian revolutions, but instead one of the worst counter-revolutions ever seen (and indubitably the worst defeat the whole Socialist and Labour movement, and the Communist International in particular, had ever had in Europe): the victory of Nazism in Germany. Finally, ten years later than announced, came the war. So, even if they publically denied it,[41] the leaders of the Comintern had to yield to the fact that the 'third period' looked in the end more as Bukharin saw it than as it was seen, immediately after the Sixth Congress, by the catastrophic optimism of Stalinists. They were then obliged to create a new period in their history, the period of the Popular Front, although it was never called the fourth period.[42]

The above periodization was soon contested. The most obvious way to oppose it was to divide the history of the Communist International into roughly two periods: before and after the death of Lenin, as Trotsky himself did, calling a collection of his writings *The Third International after Lenin*.[43] This is a tempting division as it enables the 'democratic' Comintern of Lenin with its four congresses in its four first years, to be contrasted with the 'autocratic' Comintern of Stalin, with its three

congresses in twenty years. In the former, a lively discussion on theoretical matters, as well as the spread of revolutions over Europe, could be contrasted with the 'monolithism' of Stalin and the burying of the hope (or the myth) of world revolution by rampant Russian nationalism.

But, of course, this is an oversimplification. The revolutionary wave ebbed not after Lenin and his creation, the Comintern, but perhaps with the defeat of the confused movement that Frank Borkenau, a former militant and one of the first historians of the International, hesitates to call the 'German Revolution'.[44] The political style of Stalin was perhaps quite different from that of Lenin, but the one who prohibited factionalism in the Bolshevik Party was not Stalin, but Lenin.[45]

Borkenau proposed three periods in the history of the Comintern: 'During the first period the Comintern is mainly an instrument to bring about revolution. During the second period it is mainly an instrument in the Russian factional struggles. During the third period it is mainly an instrument of Russian foreign policy'.[46] But as he himself says, the boundaries among periods are not rigid. Moreover, they change with the political leanings of the author who proposes them: thus, Julius Braunthal, a historian sympathetic to the Second International, correlates Borkenau's third period with the Fourth Congress, in 1922.[47]

But in general both friends and foes tend to measure the different periods of the Comintern's history against a single criterium: either victory or defeat in the struggle for seizing power in Russia or abroad. It could be said, then, that this is also a Machiavellian approach to that history: the Comintern people are judged, as Lenin did for Anarchists, 'on grounds of expediency'.

The Comintern and the non-European peoples

For the Comintern itself, those periods and policies were its response to the problems that arose from the European bourgeoisie – and the revolutions against it. Nevertheless, there were, for Communists, other problems, other challenges which required different answers – the colonial world. Perhaps the main paradox in the history of the Comintern is that, in the long run, the influence of Leninism has been much greater among these peoples than among the European working class which was, so to speak, the beloved child of the Leninists.

It is also in this area of colonial politics that the inner contradictions of the Comintern emerge most clearly; its leaders were the instigators of a worldwide revolutionary agitation and at the same time they were the

heads of a national state with its own particular interests. For, if it was originally from Europe that the danger which menaced the Soviet Union came, it was from the colonial world that the danger came which menaced the capitalist countries. To put the accent on revolutionizing the colonies, making them the centre of its political actions, would mean that the Comintern was taking the offensive; to put concern for Europe in first place would mean that it was a choosing a defensive role, i.e. defence of the Soviet Union. It could be said that the latter was the role chosen by the Comintern and everybody in it; Leninists as well as Trotskyites, Bukharinists as well as Stalinists.

Therefore, the colonial policies of the Comintern can also be categorized in periods. But these differ from those previously mentioned. They could change from one World Congress to another, depending not only upon the prevailing 'mood' in every meeting, but also upon the kind of relations that the Soviet Union had at any given moment with the colonial powers. Thus, at the First Congress of 1919, the main concern was the revolution in Europe, and Europe meant in the first place Germany (which among colonial powers had, even before its defeat, a 'have not' status). Only scattered references were made to colonial matters. In his report, the Dutch delegate De Rutgers raised the problem,[48] as did Lenin himself, who insisted that the new International had to show colonial peoples that it was ready to work actively in collaboration with them even if their beliefs and their creeds were not the same as those of Marxists.[49] Furthermore, he asked that the word 'barbarian' be erased from a resolution, when speaking of colonial soldiers.[50] The final manifesto included a reference to the colonies, but it left their liberation dependent upon the liberation of the colonizing country's working class.[51]

At the Second Congress (1920) the question arose in a different manner. The Indian Manabendranath Bhatacharya, later widely known as Roy, took a somewhat opposite point of view. He stated that it was the loss of the colonies together with the revolution in the metropolitan countries which would bring about the downfall of Capitalism.[52] This last reference to the metropolitan countries is obviously the result of a compromise, for Roy clashed violently with the Italian, Serrati, whose position was roughly the same as that expressed in the manifesto of the First Congress.[53] Roy won the support of Lenin, who nevertheless blamed the Indian Communists for being incapable of creating a Communist Party, notwithstanding India's five million proletarians.

The report of Lenin on colonial questions favoured supporting the national-bourgeois movements only when they were in fact revolution-

ary ones, i.e. that they not only accepted the collaboration of the Comintern, but also independent Communist propaganda and agitation.[54] As Fernando Claudin, the Spanish historian of Communism said, it was the search for a 'white blackbird': a bourgeoisie which would consent to being beheaded overnight if its own revolution succeeded.[55]

It was at the Second Congress that the 'colonial question' became the 'Oriental question',[56] as it would be termed during the next eight years, till the Sixth Congress. But that was one of the rare moments when the national interests of Russia and the struggle of colonial peoples coincided to such an extent as to impose a given policy on the Comintern. The main enemy of the Russian Revolution (and of the European revolution as well) was Great Britain, which also happened to be the biggest colonial power, the master of Asia. On the other hand, Russia was – or had been – both a colonial and an 'oriental' power. The Comintern decided to give those peoples a good example of the 'opposite side' of colonialism: a revolution in a metropolis whose leadership then called upon their former 'slaves' to rebel also.

Thus, immediately after the Second World Congress, the Comintern summoned the 'enslaved popular masses of Persia, Armenia and Turkey' to meet with the Third International in Baku.[57] At that moment, those people were restless, some in open revolt. They were also neighbours of the Russian Revolution, and they were Islamic people as were many of those of the former Russian Tsardom. So, in holding that meeting, the Communist International was able to combine the colonial revolution and the defence of the Soviet Revolution. But it did not last. One year later, the Comintern had to choose between Russian national interest and the world solidarity of Communists, and it chose the former.

Going home after the Congress, the Turkish delegates were received by the pious peasants of their country with a hostility that only such atheistic revolutionaries could provoke. In the end, they were tortured and slain by the revolutionary followers of Kemal Pasha.[58] When the Third Congress (1921) met however, there was not the expected condemnation of a regime which had massacred Communists. At the same time, Great Britain signed a commercial treaty with an isolated and hungry Russia. At the Third Congress of the Communist International, the problems of the colonial world were seldom discussed, in spite of the violent protests of Roy.[59] The desire to maintain good relations with both Turkey and England, which the encircled Soviet government needed so badly, weighed heavily upon the Comintern.

The situation was somewhat different a year later. Not only was there a vote on the 'Eastern question', but also a letter was sent to the workers

of Turkey, as well as another to the Indian workers. But even though the Comintern protested the persecution of Communists, it leaned towards moderation regarding the Turkish nationalist movement, and both Radek and Bukharin insisted that the time for the proletarian revolution had not yet arrived; conditions were not yet ripe.[60] In any case, there was a clear reversal of the position taken in the Third Congress.

Besides the fact that the colonial question was, so to speak, 're-entered' at the Fourth Congress (1922), there were two other elements that are worth noting. The first one is that, as Roy said, the Comintern had realized after the Second Congress that the colonial world was not homogeneous, that there were some countries with a strong bourgeoisie, others where the bourgeoisie was very weak, and finally some very primitive countries.[61] Therefore, the Congress was told to deal with the colonial problem in a practical manner, not, as the Second Congress did, only theoretically. The other question that arose was the so-called Negro question.[62] During the first years of the Comintern, this problem was considered to be very important, and long before the Comintern 'discovered' Latin America, the condition of blacks in the United States was seen as the Achilles heel of American Capitalism. But the Communist Party was never able to insert itself into the Negro movement.

At the Fifth Congress (1924), the Comintern switched from the Middle East to China. The alliance with the Kuomintang began at a moment in which this party was touted as a model for the revolutionary movement in the colonies. Thus, the manifesto 'To the peoples of the East' said that 'In unceasing struggle against the imperialists and native feudalists, the Communist parties of the East will now as before support every honest expression of the movement for national liberation directed against the exploiting yoke of foreign capital, thus confronting the rapacious international bourgeoisie with the anti-imperialist front'.[63]

The Sixth Congress (1928) showed, with reference to colonial countries, two main trends. The first was the tendency to reverse the tactics which were dominant in the former congress related to the alliance with the national bourgeoisie. This was the consequence of the attitude of the Kuomintang towards the Communists. This problem was linked to another one: the Trotskyists blamed the Comintern (and the policies that the Bolshevik Party, under the leadership of Stalin, had imposed) for the bloody defeat in China. The answer of the Stalinists would be the launching of a sectarian and far-Leftist response, the so-called 'class against class' tactic which would be the main characteristic of the 'third period'.[64]

The second trend was what has been called the 'discovery' of Latin America. Actually, it was in fact the discovery of a new world power, the United States. Of course, American imperialism was not something that loomed overnight on the world scene; well before this congress, Eugene Varga, the most important Comintern economic theoretician, had forecast not only its power, but also the fact that the United States would be the main power to oppose the Soviet Union in the future.[65] But at the Sixth Congress, the Comintern seemed to realize that the 'weakest link' of American imperialism was in its Latin American hinterland. In his opening speech, Bukharin noted the Latin American presence as one of the most significant facts of that meeting, and blamed the 'provincialism' of the Europeans for not reacting quickly and strongly enough to the invasion of Nicaragua by the American marines.[66]

At the Seventh Congress (1935), the colonial problems were not treated as a separate point on the agenda, but there was, however, a separate report on those questions. The speaker was the Chinese, Wang Ming, who dedicated considerable space to the experience of the Brazilian Communist Party and its *National Liberation Alliance*, which was upheld as an example to the other Communist Parties of the area.[67] The question of the colonial struggle sparked off a lively interchange both in the discussion of the Fascist offensive and on the dangers of war, the two main subjects of this congress.[68] There was, as a consequence of the Seventh Congress, a development which would later have considerable importance: the loosening of the links which tied the ECCI to the national sections.[69]

2

Latin America in the Comintern

The bureaucratic headquarters

The anti-federalism of the Third International made it very distrustful of any attempt to promote different policies for different areas, still less to let them take shape, or even be discussed *in situ*. If Latin America was in some way an exception, it was more apparent than real. When the Comintern, obliged perhaps by geographical circumstances, consented to let the sections of this area convene and discuss particular tactics, it was due not only to the fact that the strategic issues (the main enemy, the character of the Latin American revolution) had been determined from Moscow, but the tactical issues also (class against class, forming of 'Bolshevised' parties). It was then less a matter of discussing than of accepting a predetermined policy. But, even in those circumstances, the Comintern preferred direct control, and tried to organize bureaucratic headquarters which could deal with Latin America, prior to any meeting of their sections.

The American Bureau of Amsterdam

The above mentioned rule began with an exception. The European Bureau of the Comintern in Amsterdam (and what could be considered its 'son', the American Bureau) was more a product of circumstances than the real will of either the Russian Revolution or the Third International. With Soviet Russia isolated from Europe, it was decided to create a European bureau which would enable Moscow to keep in touch with the followers of the Comintern in the West. Berlin, as the epicentre of European revolution should have been the seat of such a bureau. However, at this time, a Dutch Communist reached Moscow (via Japan!), and was authorised to open another bureau in Amsterdam, which did not last very long because of German opposition and also

because in the first days of February 1920 the Dutch police caught and expelled the foreign delegates – the most important of them being Clara Zetkin – thanks to the work of an *agent provocateur* brought by the American delegate Fraina.[1] Moreover, the Amsterdam Bureau was thought to be influenced by the Dutch Communists who were not only very few, but infected with the 'infantile disorder' of left-wing anti-parliamentarism. The Amsterdam Bureau was then rapidly dissolved.[2] It had, however, time to receive a Mexican delegate and to decide on the formation of an all-America bureau, the headquarters of which was to be in Mexico, because of Mexico's geographical location and also because of the presence there of many political refugees.[3] The United States party was charged with the organization of this bureau and with organizing a Pan-American conference of Communists: 'for which the preparations made in Mexico are to be utilized. This bureau will probably elect Mexico for its residence' said the document.[4]

The 'Mexican' delegate was in fact the Russian Mikhail Borodin.[5] Some Communist propaganda in Mexico had already begun to be signed by a so-called Latin American Bureau of the Third International.[6] However, these initiatives were doomed to last a very short time and in any case, to reach a very tiny audience. The Mexican Communist Party had less than 1,000 affiliates, most of them foreigners.[7]

The Latin American Bureau in Moscow

As is easily understandable, very little information has emerged concerning the offices of the Comintern in Moscow, and particularly those of the Latin Americans. However, from the sources so far available, a picture can be drawn revealing the following elements. For some time, the affairs of Latin America in Moscow were discussed in the 'Latin Secretariat', that is, the one which dealt with France, Italy, Spain and probably Portugal. The first indication of a discussion in that secretariat on Latin America was given by a Brazilian delegate at the Congress of 1922. The secretariat would have met to discuss the situation of the Brazilian Party, which had asked for affiliation with the International. This meeting of the Latin Secretariat was attended by the Brazilian Canellas, a picturesque personality called ironically by Trotsky 'the South American phenomenon', and also by the following Comintern leaders: the Italian, Antonio Gramsci; the Japanese, Sen Katayama; the Hungarian, Evgeni Varga; the Swiss, A. Stirner;[8] the Spaniards, Serra and Gonzalez; the Frenchman, Boris Souvarine; a pair of delegates sent by the Argentine Party, Penelon and Greco, and one

from Uruguay. The same source speaks of a previous meeting of the Latin Secretariat to discuss the situation in the Argentine Party, with representatives of its minority (the party was obviously split), but without giving more details about the people who attended the meeting.[9]

Latin American issues continued to be discussed in the Latin Secretariat for at least six more years, for at the Sixth World Congress of 1928, a representative of the Young Communist International, Darcy, criticized the fact that the Latin American questions were discussed in the Latin Secretariat instead of in a Pan-American one. He indicated that although the Latin American countries might share similarities in their languages with the so-called Latin countries of Europe, they did not have the same type of political problems.[10]

After this date, the situation presumably changed, with the expansion of some parties in Latin America, and also the greater interest that Moscow showed towards the continent. By 1928, Stirner speaks of the archives of the 'Mexican commission',[11] and in his memoirs, the Peruvian, Eudocio Ravines, remembers by the end of 1937 a certain 'Latin American Section' of the Comintern as having its headquarters well established in Moscow in the street named 'Ozhod-Niriat', under the direction of a brilliant intellectual, the Russian ex-soldier Sinani.[12]

The South American Secretariat

On March 25, 1922, a Syrian, Abilio de Nequete, met with some comrades from other parts of Brazil to found the Communist Party. He represented at the same time his town, Porto Alegre, the Communist Party of Uruguay and the Comintern's Bureau for Propaganda in South America.[13] This is the first reference encountered about such a bureau. In December of the same year, the Enlarged ECCI of the Comintern decided to accept the Communist Party of Brazil as a 'sympathiser party' and charged the bureau with the task of organising the Communist Party of Brazil with the help of the Brazilians themselves. But according to Canellas, 'this bureau' was only 'a myth useful for appearances' sake in the ECCI. Any attempt to assign a real function to this institution would have had 'the opposition of Argentinians . . .'[14]

Actually, the South American Secretariat was created only after the Fifth Congress of 1924. Two years later, the report of the ECCI spoke of its activities in these enthusiastic terms:

> Shortly after the 5th World Congress, the Executive decided to organize a headquarters in South America in order to direct the activities of the

Communist Parties and the international campaigns of the Comintern in the various South American countries. But this decision could be realized only in the summer of 1925 [The sentence is ambiguous: if it is speaking of the Argentinian summer, the date is probably December, 1925. M.C.] Under the direction of Penelon, member of the ECCI and for many years General Secretary of the Argentine Party, the South American Bureau of the ECCI was established in Buenos Aires. The work of a few months has already shown extraordinarily successful results. For the first time the Executive receives regular and detailed information on the economic and political situation and upon the status of the labor movement of the Latin American countries. On the other hand, through the agency of the South American Secretariat the Communist parties and the revolutionary organizations of Latin America were periodically informed of the activity of the Executive and the CPs of other countries.[15]

When speaking of the work of this secretariat four years later, Codovilla explained that it worked with the direct representation of the Communist parties of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Chile, as well as the representative of the ECCI.[16] But actually, before being integrated in such a manner, the South American Secretariat was composed mostly by Argentinians, and therefore tended to reflect the crisis that shattered their party. Thus, the first number of 1927 of the South American Secretariat organ *La Correspondencia Sudamericana* announced that its editorial activities were to be directed by Rodolfo Ghioldi who had been 'designated to take part in the South American Secretariat of the CI'.[17] It was one of the first public steps to put Penelon (the former director of the review) out of the party and the secretariat. In fact, this secretariat collapsed and a year later had to be reorganised as previously mentioned, holding its 'inaugural session of this second phase in Buenos Aires on 29, 30 June–1, 2 July (1928)'. It was formed by two Argentinians and a representative for each of the parties of Brazil, Uruguay and Chile.[18]

Henceforth, the secretariat would be dominated by the strongly polemical personality of Codovilla. He had the support of Moscow but it was not the only source of his power: Humbert-Droz, then a member of the ECCI and one who was not precisely his friend, acknowledged implicitly that without Codovilla, the secretariat would have disintegrated once again.[19]

The secretariat was charged with a variety of tasks. The agenda of that first meeting of the 'second epoch' gives an idea of their extent: publication of *La Correspondencia Sudamericana* and of a bulletin as well; creation of a publishing bureau; a working plan for aiding the Communist Party of Chile as well as for helping the victims of the Chilean dictatorship; information about the crisis of the Argentinian

party as well as the preparation of its congress; preparation also for the Congress of the Communist Party of Brazil and the meeting of the enlarged Central Committee of the Uruguayan Communist Party; the labour movement and the tactics to follow for fighting the 'yellow' organisation to be created, the 'Confederación Sindical Iberoamericana'; the situation of the anti-imperialist movement in Latin America, as well as its unification on the basis of the programme of the Brussels Conference; a continental campaign of agitation on the anniversary of the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti; preparation of a Latin American Communist Congress; a campaign for helping the labour unions of China (yes!); the preparation of a Conference of the Communist Party of Paraguay; discussion of the program of the Communist International.[20] It is practically impossible to check if this agenda was discussed in its entirety, still less if all the tasks proposed were carried out. It was, however, typical of the Comintern to impose such heavily loaded agendas on its sections.

Some of the tasks proposed in that meeting were, however, successfully achieved: the creation of a Latin American 'Red' Confederation of Labour Unions which, even if it never seems to have been very strong, was nevertheless a way of challenging the Amsterdam International Labour Union and of spreading among the organised workers of the continent the slogans and programs of the Comintern and the Red International of Labour Unions;[21] the publication of the review of the South American Secretariat, as well as setting up the activities of the Publication Bureau which translated into Spanish several documents of the Comintern.[22] Codovilla speaks also of the work done with the parties of the countries which had representation in the South American Secretariat, and also of sending delegations to and having discussions with incipient or existing parties of Paraguay, Peru and Bolivia.[23]

Nevertheless, perhaps the greatest achievement of this secretariat was the meeting in Buenos Aires of the First Conference of Latin American Communists. The preparatory work of the meeting, the publications before and after it, the discussions themselves, gave the Comintern, for the first time, an idea of the actual state of the revolutionary process in Latin America. In different conditions, perhaps the Comintern would have been able to profit from these events. But at this moment, the 'final solution' in the fight – and the victory, as Shapiro says – of Stalin over the party became clear. As its party-guide, the Comintern itself began to lose its importance. That is why it can be said that the most brilliant achievement of the South American Secretariat was also its swan song. One year later it disappeared from the limelight to be replaced by an

underground organization, the so-called Latin American Bureau. Before describing this somewhat mysterious body, however, something has to be said about another supposed fruit of the Buenos Aires meeting, the Caribbean Bureau of the Communist International.

The Caribbean Bureau

There is little evidence left of its existence: no regular bulletin, no known journal, no manifesto bearing its signature. The National Archives of the United States has a section on the Communist International: there is no file on the 'Caribbean Bureau', whose headquarters were said to be in New York. There is nothing in the Public Library of New York, either. When the Venezuelan police, in the mid-1930s, stole some letters from the archives of the left-wing exiles, then the Caribbean Bureau came to light but only by inference: there is not a single document which could give any proof of its real existence.[24] However, some scattered references to this bureau give the following faint picture.

It seems to have been founded after the meeting of Buenos Aires, perhaps following a decision taken there. In any case, the Venezuelan Ricardo A. Martínez proposed its creation, with Mexico as the probable seat.[25] At one time, perhaps at the very moment of its foundation, it was joined by two Americans, Alexander Bittelman and Earl Browder, a Venezuelan, Ricardo A. Martínez, and a representative of the Young Communist International.[26] It had at least one auxiliary committee, for dealing with the affairs of Colombia and Venezuela, which seems to have been joined by the Venezuelans Gustavo Machado and Salvador de la Plaza and the Colombian Ignacio Torres Giraldo, by this time general secretary of the Colombian Communist Party.[27] There is a police reference to the existence of this sub-bureau. A letter sent by the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation J. Edgar Hoover to Adolf A. Berle, Assistant Secretary of State, who had asked for information about Gustavo Machado in 1944, stated that:

> On August 5, 1944, information was received from Source E indicating that the subject was a member of an organization entitled 'Caribbean Bureau of the Third International' also known as 'Buro del Caribe'. This organization, according to Source E, was designed to coordinate communist activities of the Caribbean area and the United States.
>
> On August 9, 1944, Source A advised that the subject in a conversation with him had informed that he was originally a member of an organization entitled 'Caribbean Bureau of the Third International' and that their headquarters had

been in New York City. According to Source A, Gustavo stated that this society, originally formed in 1927 or 1928, had been dissolved in 1930 or 1931 to avoid further connections with certain of its members who had unsavory reputations.

Gustavo stated that this organization had been designed as stated to control the Communist activities in the Caribbean countries and to coordinate them with the American Communist Party.[28]

The Caribbean Bureau eliminated itself as silently and secretly as it had appeared. In 1938, the organ of the Venezuela section of the Comintern declared this bureau 'non-existent'.[29]

The South American Bureau

On May Day of 1930, *La Correspondencia Sudamericana* announced that it would suspend its publication by decision of the South American Secretariat. It was to be replaced by a new publication, the *Revista Comunista*. It was not, they said, a matter of a simple change of title, but rather one of content and aims: 'to change from *La Correspondencia Sudamericana* to the *Revista Comunista* [was] to change from an *informative* organ, very useful in its moment, to a *theoretical* publication of the Communist movement in Latin America'.[30]

Judging by the content of the few available numbers of the new publication, there was no appreciable difference between it and the previous one. There were articles on the 'situation' of several Latin American countries and the work of the Communist parties, manifestos and resolutions. Concerning 'theoretical' matters, the most notable change effected was the publishing of *two* texts of Stalin in the same edition of the review. In general, it could be said that the change from one periodical to another seems to have been somewhat regressive. It also was not published very frequently. The issue of June 1931 was Numbers 4 and 5 indicating that it had appeared only four times in nine months, while the previous publication had appeared fortnightly.[31]

All this seems to have been the tip of a deeper change in the life of the South American Secretariat. For following its later activities, we basically have the very hostile memoirs of the Peruvian ex-Communist, Eudocio Ravines, written twenty years later, when he had become a somewhat paranoid anti-Communist. Ravines said that in the thirties:

A carefully selected group of Communists of various nationalities had begun to operate in South America, as a South American Bureau of the Communist International, actually controlled and directed for the first time by the Soviet

Union. A large delegation had arrived, headed by Guralsky. His comparative youth notwithstanding (he was only forty), Guralsky was a Bolshevik of long revolutionary experience . . .

The French Communist 'Cremet' who had eluded the police for months . . . was in fact Guralsky. In the South American Bureau of the Communist International he went under the name of 'Rustico'. A young man called 'Pierre' acted as Guralsky's immediate adviser. His French was peppered with Parisian idioms and slang expressions but his accent betrayed him as one who had learned French as an adult. Pierre was in fact very proud of being Russian . . .

The majority of this policy-making group of agitators in South America was composed of Russians and Poles, together with the Czech Frederic Glaufbauf, the Tunesian 'Nemo' and the two Italians Marcucci and 'Orestes'.

We, as leaders of the South American Communist parties, composed the minority. South Americans also formed the phalanx of functionaries who did all sorts of diverse tasks, office and editorial work, and propaganda. The South American Bureau of the Comintern had no fixed site of operations; it acted as a flying brigade, moving from one place to another at a moment's notice.[32]

Notwithstanding its hostility, Ravines' text is consistent with known circumstances. Firstly, the worsening of political conditions in those countries which could have been the seat of the Bureau, obliged it to retreat deeper into the underground; secondly, retreat underground was even more the case for the 'agents' of the Comintern, whose activities could easily be perceived by the police as simple espionage. While Ravines viewed this new bureau as a 'flying brigade', such a way of behaving was no more than normal considering the tasks it had to perform, the dangerous role it had to play and the fact that it was mostly composed of foreigners travelling with forged papers. Like the Caribbean Bureau, but unlike the former Secretariat, this bureau left little evidence of having existed. Nonetheless, even this precarious evidence allows for some comment.

In the first place the reorganization of the South American Secretariat must have come as a surprise to the Communists in the area. Nothing led them to guess in Buenos Aires that one year later, the group of leaders who had invited them would be thrown into the infamous dustbins of history. It is obvious that the reorganization came less as a consequence of the Latin American situation than as a result of the internal struggles in Moscow, with the ousting of Bukharinists, to which faction the emissary of the Comintern to Buenos Aires, Humbert-Droz, belonged.[33]

Secondly, if the Comintern wanted to handle its Latin American sections directly, why precisely at this moment? This is not a rhetorical

question: for most Communist parties, the 'hand of Moscow' appeared when it was feared that there was some danger of losing control of a given section. This seemed not to be the case with Latin America at this very moment. The absolute loyalty of Codovilla towards Moscow, his hard-core Stalinism, were already more than evident. That Stalin preferred to have as leader of this bureau an old Zinovievist such as Guralsky,[34] could be due to the loss of interest shown by the Kremlin in the area after 1929. Besides the lack of political evidence of its existence, this bureau seems to have liquidated itself in silence. Perhaps its disappearance is connected to the elimination of the most important headquarters of the Comintern in the West – in Germany. In any case, after 1932 there are extremely few references to the South American Bureau.[35]

The 'hand of Moscow'

The underground activities of the Comintern were not always a consequence of repression. It should be recalled that the maintenance of a parallel apparatus was one of the '21 conditions' voted at the Third World Congress which had to be fulfilled by the sections which wished to join the Communist International. And what was a rule for the particular sections, of course, was also true for the organizational centre. Moreover, it was obvious that an international party, whose avowed aim was the overthrowing of bourgeois government by any means, including armed struggle, had to act clandestinely most of the time. On the other hand, it is logically impossible to have the same people working legally and illegally, at least in normal conditions. Even less was it feasible to have the same people charged with keeping a permanent contact with the headquarters at Ozhod-Niriat street in Moscow. In those conditions, such an organization had to have a special net of secret agents.

The 'agents from Moscow'

The problem is complicated further by the fact that this organization was led by a party whose leaders were at the same time leaders of a government centred at the Kremlin and who, at least in the beginning, not only confessed but were proud of playing that double role. Their party (to put it in neutral terms) had to be the main contributor to the funds of the Comintern. Thus, the confusion between 'professional revolutionaries' sent by the Comintern and the functionaries of the Narkomindel – the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs[36] – was

normal, not to say deliberate and was routinely criticized by the adversaries of Communism. In those conditions, even though their activities were exaggerated by the police and anti-Communist propagandists, the 'agents from Moscow' (as well as the 'gold from Moscow') were not mere legends.

Before dealing directly with the work of those agents, something has to be said about this mixture of diplomacy and subversion. As Terry J. Uldricks notes, three attitudes, not to say periods, in the relations between the Soviet government and the Comintern concerning those questions can be discerned: (1) diplomacy is the servant of revolution, and so, Narkomindel is the servant of Comintern; (2) under the direction of Georgii Chicherin, the Soviet Foreign Affairs Commissary, mostly after 1921, Narkomindel and Comintern do their best to keep themselves apart; (3) the Comintern even though a source of embarrassment for Soviet diplomacy, was so more 'because of its rhetoric than its actions. There was no more talk of "closing up shop" [as Trotsky thought in the early years of the October Revolution] at the Foreign Commissariat. Ironically, it was the Third International which was eventually "cast into the dustbins of history".'[37]

Without pretending to completely clarify a matter so understandably immersed in darkness, it is however possible to classify the work of the Comintern agents so far known, according to the above categories. The first one matches well with the first emissary from the Comintern and the Soviet government sent to Latin America: Mikhail Gruzenberg, best known as 'Borodin'. The memoirs of Roy, as well as those of the American 'Gómez' have given a *rocambolesque* picture of this personage: an Old Bolshevik friend of Lenin, who had supposedly sent him to smuggle the crown jewels into the Western hemisphere, in order to get cash for starting the work of world revolution.[38]

Boris Souvarine has put all that straight: the Old Bolshevik was one of those men despised by Trotsky as giving off 'an unmistakable whiff of Bundism' – that is the organization of Jewish Socialists so harshly countered by the Bolsheviks. The 'friend of Lenin' and supposedly his envoy, had been sent by Angelica Babalanova, the first president of the Comintern.[39] The 'crown jewels' were in fact jewels, but not necessarily of the crown; every single jewel sent out from Russia by the Soviet government, became instantly a Tsarist possession in the popular newspapers. As Roy himself recalls, Borodin, this financier of world revolution, had to be himself financed by Roy, whose German funds seemed to be enormous.[40] Having thus shrunk to these more modest proportions, Borodin nevertheless can be seen as an example of the

confusion of tasks between the Comintern and Narkomindel typical of the very first years of existence of Soviet power.

After 1921, when it became evident that Europe, which Lenin had seen in the previous years as 'pregnant with revolution', was not ripe to deliver such a child, the Soviet government, eager to have diplomatic recognition from the bourgeois regimes, became more careful about separating the revolutionary from the diplomatic tasks. The Comintern nevertheless continued to send its agents abroad to keep in touch and, moreover, to control its sections. In addition to the delegates sent for very specific purposes (attending a Congress, for instance), several types of those 'agents of Moscow' seemed to have functioned in Latin America.

There were some people sent for relatively long periods, in order to help a party with its political and organizational tasks. In Mexico, some sources point to the Japanese, Sem Katayama, in the twenties,[41] but there is not much direct evidence of his work, unlike that of Vittorio Vidali, an Italian Communist known also as 'Sorrenti' and other names, the most famous being 'Carlos Contreras', under which he attended the Sixth World Congress as delegate from Mexico.[42] He later became known worldwide as 'Comandante Carlos' of the International Brigade in Spain. It is not impossible that the Pole, Fabio Grobart, had been one of those envoys, but here it should be taken into consideration that the anti-Communist propaganda in Cuba could have exaggerated his position. Grobart has been a very important leader of the Cuban Communist Party from its foundation to the present, more than half a century later. His Slavic origin made him a logical choice to be targeted as the 'man from Moscow' behind the other leaders of the Cuban Communist Party.[43] In his memoirs, Eudocio Ravines pictures himself as one of those envoys, sent under the name of 'Jorge Montero' to help the Communist Party of Chile to launch the Popular Front.[44] That is possible, although Ravines could be exaggerating his own importance; otherwise, it is difficult to understand how a party such as the Chilean, which had been a mass party notwithstanding the defeats endured (partly because of the sectarianism of the 'third period' imposed by the Comintern) had to be led from behind the scenes by a man whose party, the Peruvian one, had never been of any particular significance.[45]

There are also some examples of emissaries from the Comintern who had been sent to one or more countries to carry out particularly dangerous tasks. The best known of those envoys were the people sent to help Prestes in his disastrous adventure of 1935: the German, Arthur Ewert, who lost his sanity under the severe torture he had to endure; the Argentinian, Rodolfo Ghioldi, who spent several years in jail; Olga

Benario Prestes, 'a specialist of military affairs' in the Comintern,[46] who was also the wife of Prestes. There is a less well-known case: the American, Joseph Kornfeder who, after attending the Congress where the Socialist Revolutionary Party of Colombia became the Communist Party, entered Venezuela, with the first manifesto of the so-called 'Venezuelan Section of the Communist International', spoke to several small groups of students before being caught along with most of them by the Venezuelan police, only to be freed a few days later (while his young comrades remained in prison for some years). He allegedly became an agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the American Communist Party some years later.[47]

The flying squad pictured by Ravines in his memoirs as the South American Bureau of the years 1930–4 could very well match with the third line or period of relations between the Soviet government and the Comintern, when the latter became absolutely subservient to the former. It has already been mentioned how hostile a witness Ravines is. Nevertheless, comparing his with other sources, some of those mysterious shadows take shape. Guralsky was not a newcomer to such work. In the late twenties, he had gone to France, together with Manuilsky,[48] in order to stamp out the left wing of the Communist Party headed by Boris Souvarine;[49] he taught in the *Ecole de Cadres* of the French party and his name was in some way involved in a scandal of funds sent by Moscow to France and Spain.[50] The young Russian Communist called 'Pierre' seems to have been in Latin America for a long time before the arrival of Ravines in Buenos Aires: Humbert-Droz, in a letter written to his wife in 1929, speaks of a person who used this pseudonym, and his description of the person matches quite well with Ravines, particularly with reference to his character and political skills.[51] Given the present state of sources, it is impossible to know whether, as their enemies claim, some of those agents, if not all of them, worked directly with the Soviet intelligence services.

The 'gold from Moscow'

Finally, something should be said about the funds sent by the Comintern to help its sections, the infamous 'gold from Moscow'. This is, of course, an even more mysterious subject. However, some facts are worth nothing. It is not easy to maintain that such funds never existed. It would have been very difficult for small parties of very impoverished and distant countries to send delegations to the different meetings of the Comintern so frequently without the help of Moscow.[52] But it is worth

asking if that financial support went further. During the years of the Comintern's existence, there was no scandal in Latin America related to the discovery of funds sent by Moscow, as happened in France with Cremet and Guralsky; not even in the Brazilian fiasco of 1935. Perhaps that was due to the lack of Soviet embassies and the danger of transporting cash over such a long distance.

Even the most hostile testimonies do not speak of envoys bearing 'gold from Moscow'. When Ravines arrived in Chile to launch a newspaper for the party, he apparently raised his funds among the upper classes of Chile, but he makes no mention of having received regularly 'gold from Moscow'.[53] There are references, however, to some quantities of money sent by the International Red Aid to political prisoners and their families.[54]

Finally, there are the cases of funds being sent from Latin America to Moscow. A. Barnard mentions in his unpublished manuscript a case where the new Chilean Communist Party raised funds for helping the Soviet Union,[55] and the Communist Party of Venezuela did the same during the war, launching a public campaign to send 100.000 bolivars 'to the Allies'.[56]

Latin America in Moscow

It is logical that in an international organization, the importance of the national sections could be related to, if not measured by, the degree of participation in its various meetings and its governing bodies. In the case of the Communist International, the relationship with the centre being what it was, the journey to Moscow became a sort of pilgrimage whose religious-like character increased with the passing years. Therefore, an analysis of the participation in discussions in that self-proclaimed atheistic Mecca cannot be considered as simple 'institutional' history but as something more profound. Even sections such as the American ones (from the North as well as from the South), that might find it quite difficult to reach Moscow, felt the necessity to go there in order to find a solution to their internal problems, be they of a doctrinal, a tactical or even an organizational nature.

The Congresses of the Comintern were too big an event to meet every year. As a matter of fact, there were only seven in almost a quarter of a century. They were originally replaced by the so-called Plena of the enlarged Executive Committee but, after 1933, even these were stopped. Thus, the 'institutional' history of the Comintern finished in 1935, with the Seventh World Congress.

Latin America in the World Congresses

As it will be seen later, the participation of a Latin American party, the Argentinian, in the First World Congress of the Communist International (by the 'proxy' supposedly given to the Italian Socialist Party) can be considered as a sort of myth: it is very unlikely that any such participation took place.

At the Second World Congress, Latin America was represented by the Mexican Party, although one cannot exactly state that the Latin Americans or even the Mexicans were represented. The three delegates were the Indian M. N. Roy (under the name of 'Robert Allan'), his wife Evelyn ('Helen Allan') and Frank Seaman, otherwise 'Charles Phillips', otherwise 'Manuel Gómez'.[57] Perhaps this 'Gómez' was the only one able to speak fluent Spanish, having spent more time than the others in Mexico. As a matter of fact, when Latin America was named for the first time as a part of the world to be taken into consideration in the context of world politics and world revolution, it was not done by those curious 'Mexican' delegates, but by the representative of the United States of America, Fraina.[58]

At the Third World Congress, there were again two Mexican delegates. One of them also attended the Second Congress of the Young Communist International, both meetings traditionally being held at the same time. There was also an Argentine delegation, according to Radek's speech about the mandate commission.[59] Every Latin American delegation had the right to four votes. The identity of the delegates is not certain. The Mexican delegate was probably 'Ramírez', as he was a delegate to the Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions or Profintern, which was also meeting at the same time.[60] This 'Ramírez' was again Charles Phillips. The name of the delegate to the YCI Congress is not known. Concerning the Argentinian, the problem seems to be more complicated. No name is given, it seems, in the proceedings. However, in the organ of the Congress, a meeting at the Theatre of Musical Drama was announced, with the participation, among others, of a 'South American delegate', whose name was Bloure.[61] The meeting was opened by Bukharin, and when the South American delegate spoke, she did so in representation of the Conference of Communist Women.[62] Unfortunately, nothing is said about who she was, nor if she and 'Bloure' were the same person. Possibly she was the wife of Roy, who was at the same congress, representing the Communist Party of India. It is not very likely, however, because although at first 'South America' was a way of designating Latin America in Comintern

terminology, Mexico was never so included. Moreover, if she were Roy's wife, who then was the Argentinian delegate?

The parties of Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay and Mexico were invited to the Fourth Congress. At the moment of reading the credentials committee's report, only Chile was not yet present and perhaps never came.[63] The Brazilian delegate was Antonio B. Canellas[64] and through him we know that the Argentinians were Joseph Penelon and Greco.[65] The Uruguayan delegate was Francisco R. Pintos, who spent some time there, because he attended the Enlarged ECCI in June of that same year.[66] Concerning Mexico, the delegate was 'Stirner', the Swiss Woog.[67] Incredibly enough, the Communist Party of Mexico had not yet managed to send as delegate to the Congresses of the Comintern a 'true' Mexican, a situation which would continue for some time.

In the Fifth Congress, the Latin American representation shrank somewhat: only Argentina, Brazil and Mexico were there and with even fewer Latin Americans. The 'Mexican' delegate was again 'Stirner',[68] and the Argentinian a newcomer, 'Contieras', who was in fact 'Contreras', otherwise the Italian, Vittorio Vidali.[69] The only 'true' Latin American was the Brazilian, Astrojildo Pereira.[70] A curious fact worth noting is that a bulletin about the Fifth Congress reports the languages used by the different delegates at the sessions: not a single representative spoke in Spanish.[71]

At the Sixth World Congress, Bukharin said that the Latin American continent entered 'for the first time the orbit of influence of the Communist International',[72] and to underline that, besides such important parties as those of Germany, China, India and Japan, two Latin Americans (a Brazilian and a Mexican) were allowed to address the Congress in the opening session.[73] The following countries were represented there (not necessarily by parties): Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela and Mexico, a total of nine countries. Two more had been invited but could not reach Moscow: the Communist Parties of Cuba and Peru.[74] The Argentine delegation, which at the Third Congress had the right to five votes, this time, with four delegates, had the right to seven.[75]

The special report on Latin American questions, as well as the discussions on the matter will be examined in later chapters. Here it is sufficient to note that these discussions were, if not very profound, at least the longest and the most interesting in the whole history of Latin American participation in the World Congresses of the Comintern. It had never happened before, it would never happen again.

The Seventh Congress had every reason to become one of the most interesting. There was an evident turning point in the tactics of the organization, particularly with respect to allowing some Communist Parties to become mass parties. Instead, the Congress turned out to be the most boring one. The ritual which was to be unchanged during a quarter of a century was performed for the first (and, in a way, the last) time in the entire existence of the Comintern. The pattern of speeches, the unavoidable cheers for 'our genius, comrade Stalin', the unanimity of the votes; all indicate that the Comintern, *stricto sensu*, had given up the ghost. Perhaps that was the reason for not publishing the report of the Credentials Committee. What would be the sense of giving figures and showing the number of votes to which each delegation had the right, if all the decisions were taken unanimously?

Without that report, the representation of the Latin American parties at the Seventh Congress cannot be determined. The only way is to study the speeches given, assuming that each one came from a delegate with full rights. Thus, we have speeches by the representatives of Brazil, Marques and Lacerda;[76] Mexico, Marenco and Serrano;[77] Cuba, Bueno;[78] Colombia, René;[79] Venezuela, Ribas;[80] Argentina, Mora and Torres;[81] and Chile, Borkes.[82]

The Plena of the Executive Committee

As has already been mentioned, the Plena of the ECCI were to become the real Congresses of the Communist International. It is not coincidental that the so-called 'Enlarged' Plena began with the Fourth Congress of 1922, that is, with the end of the most lively period of the Comintern, when its leadership still thought that the Revolution was *ad portas*. There were thirteen of these Plena between 1922 and 1933, when the last one was held. Latin American representation at those Plena was as follows:

1 (1922) A delegate from Argentina, who could have been Penelón.[83]
2 (1922) A delegate from Uruguay, Pintos.[84]
3 (1923) No delegate from Latin America.[85]
4 (1924) It is not known if there was a delegate from Latin America. Nevertheless, it took place after the Fifth Congress where Penelón had been elected a member of the ECCI.
5 (1925) A delegate from Mexico, Almanza.[86]
6 (1926) A delegate from Mexico.[87]
7 (1926) A delegate from Argentina, Codovilla.[88]
8 (1927) No published proceedings.

9 (1928) No published proceedings.
10 (1929) Brazil: Americo-Ledo (Lacerda) and Mexico, 'Ramírez'.[89]
11 (1930) No known delegate.
12 (1932) A delegate from Argentina, Altobelli.[90]
13 (1932) There was a delegate 'from Latin America' (Morales), but no indication of a particular country.[91]

The Thirteenth Plenum of the Enlarged Executive Committee was the last one. After the Seventh World Congress, a new executive Committee was elected, but there were no more meetings of the central organs. The reform of the statutes voted at this Congress gave greater independence to the national sections. The Comintern yielded to the despised sin of the Second International. It also became a sort of federation. It was a step towards extinction. The Plena of the ECCI naturally would have had more interesting discussions concerning particular aspects of the policies of the International, for the Congresses suffered from a lot of ritual, even in the best years of the organization, when the discussions were real ones. But as far as the known sources reveal, there were not many discussions of this kind concerning Latin America in those Plena.

Latin American participation in the governing bodies of the CI

The Comintern held only seven congresses in twenty-four years. The enlarged ECCI met only thirteen times. The Third International was, thus, an organization whose governing bodies were in fact the permanent executive organs. The more important of those bodies were the Executive Committee, the Presidium of the ECCI, and the International Control Commission, which was concerned with disciplinary questions.

It is not easy to follow the evolution in the composition of these organs. It is understandable that they were linked with a particular political situation, or a particular tactic of the Comintern. The struggle for power in the Soviet Party was immediately reflected in the composition of those governing bodies of the Comintern. But what makes the understanding of that evolution more complicated is the habit of co-opting new members for those organs. The influence that people such as the Argentinian Codovilla had in the ECCI was not always the result of having been elected at a Congress or of leading a very strong and important section.

In any case, the representation of Latin America in those governing bodies of the Comintern was never very large, and at first the representatives of 'South America' or Mexico were in fact Europeans, or

in any case they were not Latin Americans. Thus, after the Third World Congress, the first meeting of the ECCI on July 13, 1921 had two Latin American representatives, with voice but without vote: a representative from Argentina (who was 'not present' at that meeting) and a 'Mexican' who was in fact the Indian Roy.[92] This Executive Committee was not elected and parties could replace their representatives.[93]

After the Fourth Congress of 1922, the situation changed. The ECCI was elected, and the parties could not replace their representatives, although they could still do so for the Presidium. There were two kinds of representatives: full members and candidates to be members. The representative of 'South America' had the status of candidate and was in fact a Swiss, 'Stirner'.[94]

On July 8, 1924, for the first time, a Latin American was elected 'full member' of the ECCI. He was the leader of the Argentine Communist Party, José Penelón.[95] At the same time, two more representatives of Latin America were elected to the International Control Commission: the Brazilian 'Astrogilado' (who was in fact Astrojildo Pereira) and 'Stirner' again, for Mexico.[96] As Frantisek Svatek says, 'The sequence of names in Russian protocol is given according to the importance of respective parties', and the last ones listed were, in order, Mexico and 'South America'.[97] In 1926, the Argentinian, Vittorio Codovilla, was elected as a 'candidate to be a member' of the ECCI but in 1928, after the Tenth Plenum of the Enlarged ECCI, he was no longer a 'candidate'.

After the 'discovery' of Latin America by the Comintern in 1928, seven representatives of the sections of this area entered the ECCI: Rodolfo Ghioldi from Argentina (full member); Americo-Ledo (Lacerda) of Brazil (full member); the Chilean, Fermin Araja (full member); Julio Riasco representing the parties of Colombia and Ecuador (candidate for membership); the Cuban, López (candidate); the Mexican, Carrillo and the Uruguayan, Gómez, both full members. At the same time, Codovilla was elected to the International Control Commission. The same year, 'Rosso' (Ghioldi?) was elected to the Presidium of the ECCI in representation of 'South America'. One year later, Americo-Ledo ('Lacerda') from Brazil, was elected to the Presidium. Finally, at the Seventh World Congress, three Latin Americans were elected to the ECCI: Rodolfo Ghioldi as candidate and Luis Carlos Prestes from Brazil and Blas Roca from Cuba, both as full members.[98]

3

The Comintern in Latin America

Perhaps nowhere better than in Latin America did the Comintern show all the contradictions and finally, the lack of viability and efficiency of a world organization with a structure too rigid, too centralized and too vertical. At every step in the history of the world organization or of its national sections, it appears that as the Comintern was a single world party, then the source of the legitimacy of the national sections was less in their real strength and the degree to which they were imbedded in their own society, and in the working classes they were supposed to represent, than in the acknowledgement by Moscow that they were true 'bolshevised' Communist Parties. This circumstance sometimes makes it very difficult even to decide which criterion should be used to mark the simple question of the date of foundation of a given party. Should that criterion be the date of its first National Congress or the date of acceptance as a member by a World Congress of the Communist International? The fact is that using the first criterion creates at least two problems. Firstly, it contradicts the most carefully kept of the Comintern's organizational principles – that of being one single party and therefore having the right to decree the foundation of a particular section. The second is that to accept the date of its first Congress as that of the foundation of a section of the Comintern, could have as a consequence for Communist Parties facing severe repression (and which could not have, therefore, regular congresses) the negation of the right of belonging to the Comintern.[1]

The Latin American sections

For Latin America it is perhaps better to use the second criterion, the acceptance as members by the Comintern. But it also creates difficulties, for the Comintern accepted as members parties that it did not consider 'real' Communist parties, as was the case, in 1928, with the Socialist

Revolutionary Party of Colombia and the Socialist Party of Ecuador. Moreover, there were parties whose importance in the politics of the country to which they belonged was notable long before they were accepted by the Comintern, as was the case of the Communist Party of Costa Rica; or which never belonged to the Comintern, for example, the Salvadorian Communist Party.

In those conditions, if the periodization of the history of the Communist Parties, and in particular, details of their origins, appears unclear and often contradictory, it is due to the necessity to be extremely casuistic in establishing the criteria to do so. When studying the Comintern and its history, it would be unwise to take into consideration only parties which belonged as full members to the Third International, because that would mean not only leaving out some parties of a certain significance, but moreover, ignoring what might well have been the most interesting part of the history of some parties.

The best solution might be to take the list of parties invited to the Communist Conference of Buenos Aires in 1929, perhaps completing it with the others accepted as new members of the International at the Seventh World Congress of 1935. This has its drawbacks, however, as some of those 'parties' were nothing but paper organizations. At the 1929 meeting of Buenos Aires, fifteen parties were represented, according to a list published by the South American Secretariat, which summoned the Conference.[2] The Communist Party of Costa Rica was accepted by the Comintern in 1935. Those sixteen could be roughly divided into two parts: the 'real' sections, that is, those parties which had a closer relationship with the ECCI and in general, could also be considered the 'early' parties; and the 'minor' parties, a term referring not to their strength but to the fact that the Comintern considered that they had to be guided by their 'elder brothers'.

In this case it is also possible to perceive the vertical structure of the Comintern's organization. The Communist Parties of Costa Rica, Ecuador, and even the Communist Party of El Salvador were always more important as parties than that of Mexico; and the Brazilian and Chilean, more important than the Communist Party of Argentina, but not as sections of the Comintern

The 'real' sections

The 'real' sections consisted of four 'Southern' parties: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, and two 'Northern' ones: Mexico and Cuba.

Argentina. This party could claim to be the oldest one. It was founded

in the first days of 1918 as the International Socialist Party, a left-wing split of the Socialist Party of Argentina (a very moderate organization which supported Argentina's entry into World War I). Some sources indicate that this 'International Socialist Party' participated in the First Congress of the Third International by giving its 'proxy' to the Italian Socialist Party, but there is no obvious proof for this assertion.[3] In any case, there is nothing about it in the proceedings of the First or the Second World Congress, and there was no Italian Socialist Party at the First Congress.[4]

For the Comintern, the Communist Party of Argentina was, during almost a quarter of a century, the most trustworthy and, in a certain way, the leader of the Latin American sections, even of those that proved to be more important, either in the number of members or their significance in the political life of their countries. This leading position of the Argentinians was probably due to the following factors: (a) For the European leaders of the Comintern, Argentina was easier to understand, its conditions and its class struggle being on the surface not very different from the situation in Europe; (b) the Communist Party of Argentina showed a particular continuity in its leadership; Vittorio Codovilla and Rodolfo Ghioldi were its leaders without interruption not only to the dissolution of the Comintern, but until their deaths at a very old age in the sixties; (c) their absolute submission to the policies dictated from Moscow; (d) at least in the first years, the sending of propaganda in the official languages of the Comintern (Russian, German, French and English) was facilitated by the huge quantity of European immigrants in the country; and (e) finally, the real position of leadership that Argentina held in the whole of South America was generally recognized by other countries and worked to favour the official primacy of this party in the Comintern.[5]

Brazil. Founded in March 1922 by a group of ex-Anarchists (nine delegates representing seventy-five members from all parts of Brazil), the Communist Party of Brazil sent a delegate to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, which was reluctant to accept it as a full member, perhaps considering that party too influenced both by anarchism and Masonry. For some time, the Brazilian Communist Party was a tiny handful of militants shaken by splits and expulsions and under the tutelage of the Argentinians, whose party organization they had copied since 1924.[6] Even though it had been announced that Brazil would send four delegates to the First Conference of the Communist Parties of Latin America in Buenos Aires, only one is recorded in the proceedings. His participation was of little importance, even though he was selected for

the mainly ceremonial, closing speech.[7] During the thirties, the Communist Party of Brazil obtained its most important recruit: Luis Carlos Prestes, the legendary captain of the so-called *Coluna Prestes*.[8] The strong personality of Prestes was to deeply mark the history of the Brazilian Communist Party. Using his prestige among the military, the Comintern launched the adventurous insurrection of November 1935, which was easily repressed by the government of Getulio Vargas. Prestes spent several years in prison, but was able, at the end of World War II, to lead his party in obtaining a good percentage of the popular vote in the national elections, making it the strongest Communist Party in the continent.[9]

Chile. The Chilean was, from the very beginning, the only real 'mass' party that the Comintern had as a section for a long time in Latin America. It could also be said, as the generally hostile Robert J. Alexander does, that, with the exception of a short period in the 1930s, when the Socialist Party overtook them, the Communists of Chile 'have been an important element in the labor movement, and during much of this time they have been the principal political force among the country's workers'.[10] The strength of the Communist Party comes from its origins in the Socialist Workers Party, founded by one of the most charismatic figures of the workers movement, Luis Emilio Recabarren, in 1912. Recabarren was immediately attracted to the Russian Revolution, and soon began to persuade his comrades to join the Communist International, which was done in 1921. Throughout its life as a section of the Comintern, the Communist Party of Chile succeeded in maintaining itself as an important factor in the Chilean political scene, even when the sectarianism of the Comintern policy during the 'third period' greatly reduced its audience. The Chilean Communist Party was always more important than the Argentinian as a force in organized labour, as a political apparatus with strong representation in parliament and even in the executive, holding several portfolios in the cabinet of Gonzalez Videla in 1946. After the suicide of Recabarren in 1925, the leaders of the Party, including the internationally known poet, Pablo Neruda, showed an unshakable fidelity to Moscow. Nevertheless, they never succeeded in having as great an influence in the Comintern as the Communist parties of Argentina and Cuba. Why this was so is somewhat of a mystery in the life of the Comintern, and merits individual study.[11]

Uruguay. In the final quarter of 1920, the Socialist Party of Uruguay, by an overwhelming majority of votes, decided at its Congress to become a Communist Party, and was accepted the following year, in the

Third Congress of the Comintern, as a full member. Eugenio Gómez became its leader and remained as such until his expulsion in the late fifties – for being a Stalinist!.[12] Even though it evolved from the Socialist Party, the Anarcho-syndicalists were present from the start, and so the Party was soon obliged to launch campaigns against such tendencies both in the labour movement and in the party itself. Without having the importance on the political scene of Uruguay that the Communist Party had in Chile, and without being the recipient of the same confidence that the Comintern had shown to the Argentinians, the Uruguayan Communist Party profited nevertheless from the relatively long period of stability and political liberty which lasted in Uruguay until the sixties. They were able to build a strongly organized apparatus, provide refuge for their persecuted comrades on the continent, and at times served as the seat of the South American Secretariat and became influential in the organized labour movement.[13]

Mexico. This party could not only claim to be the first section founded by the Comintern in Latin America in 1919, but also as its founder Roy said, to be 'the first Communist Party outside Russia'.[14] Its first leaders, besides Roy himself, were foreigners, mainly American adventurers, among them one identified as a member of the intelligence service of the United States Army.[15] This fact, coupled with the presence of a novel personage, the emissary of the Soviet government, Mikhail Borodin,[16] has led some serious but not strongly unsympathetic historians to speak of the Mexican Communist Party as an example of the organization by the ECCI, of an 'artificial' body, created practically *ex nihilo* and inserted in the Mexican organism.[17] The question is not that simple. Firstly, according to the memoirs of Roy as well as other primary sources,[18] the Mexican Party was not founded by the ECCI, because the Comintern had been founded that same year in a country surrounded by strong enemies and practically cut off from any foreign contact. Secondly, what was indeed amazing was not the participation of foreigners in the foundation of a Mexican party (even if it was a section of an international organization), but the influence that some of those foreigners, starting with Roy himself, happened to have in the Mexican government, especially with President Venustiano Carranza.[19] In those circumstances, one cannot speak of the forming of the Mexican Communist Party as something 'artificial' but instead, as very natural in a historical context of crisis and revolution. If this party never succeeded in being anything more than a small group with a strong tendency to split at every tactical turning

point, and to liquidate its leadership, the causes are of diverse nature, but not necessarily linked with the 'artificiality' of its origins.

The Mexican Communist Party sent two delegates to the Second World Congress of the Comintern in 1920. Neither of them was Mexican,[20] but they initiated a relationship between Mexican Communists and the Comintern which reflected the extraordinary importance of Mexico, both strategically and politically, but which certainly did not bear a close relation to the actual strength of the section of the Third International in that country. Small and weak, the Communist Party succeeded however in having a strong influence among intellectuals and artists, the most famous of its recruits being two outstanding masters of the Mexican school of painting: Diego de Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros.[21] After the defeat of the Spanish Republic, many Marxist writers chose Mexico as a haven, becoming very influential both in the university and in publishing. Since then, Mexico has overtaken Argentina as the distributor of Marxist literature to the whole continent, publishing among other works a complete Spanish translation of *Das Kapital*.[22]

Cuba. Founded in August 1925, the Communist Party of Cuba had the extraordinary opportunity (so far experienced only by the Chilean Communists) of being perceived not as an 'international' movement but rather as an 'off-spring' of the revolutionary traditions of Cuba, and of inserting itself into the real social and political processes of the country. Its founders were Carlos Baliñas and Julio Antonio Mella. Baliñas not only belonged to the generation of the *Libertadores*, but was very close to the Cuban hero, José Martí, and founded, in the same years as the Cuban Independence War, the first Socialist groups on the island. Mella, who had been a very popular student leader, belonged to the same tradition of nationalist revolutionary intellectuals dazzled by the example of Martí.[23]

Notwithstanding this illustrious paternity, the Cuban section of the Communist International was during most of its existence hindered in its development by its distrustfulness of those same traditions, of 'petty-bourgeois intellectuals' in general and of national-revolutionary movements as well. Here the influence of the Comintern is patent, particularly after 1924 with the Fifth Congress and the so-called 'bolshevisation' of the Communist Parties. They had to become 'proletarians' not only in their strategic and tactical options,[24] but also in the composition of their leadership. At this moment the star of Francisco Calderío, a shoemaker known by his war-name 'Blas Roca', began to shine; he became a member of the ECCI and perennial leader

of the Communist Party of Cuba. Under his leadership, it became the most important force in the labour movement, increased its vote in general elections and then slid into what has been considered its biggest historical mistake: the participation of Communist ministers in the first government of Batista in the early 1940s.[25] Together with the Communist Party of the United States, the Cuban Communist Party at times served as the 'tutor' of their comrades in the Caribbean area, and lured them into the so-called 'Browderist deviation', i.e., class-collaboration and self-dissolution.[26]

As far as these 'real' sections of the Comintern are concerned, one can agree with what Victor Alba says in his otherwise hostile and strongly prejudiced work: 'in this initial period, Communism was an indigenous product, inspired certainly by Moscow's propaganda and the twenty-one conditions, but without the submissive organic links with either the Kremlin or, in large part, the Comintern'.[27]

The 'minor' parties

Here, any attempt at classification becomes more difficult. Taking into consideration the real size of the parties is not very useful: three very small parties, the Ecuadorian, the Salvadorian and the Peruvian, had in some way more success (or became for a time more important) than most of the major parties. The Communist Party of Ecuador became the first party of continental South America (two years before the Chileans) to form part of a government; the Salvadorian launched an important, if bloodily and rapidly repressed, insurrection in 1932; the Peruvian was fathered by the most outstanding Marxist theoretician (albeit somewhat heterodox) that Latin America had during the existence of the Comintern – José Carlos Mariátegui. Using the criterion of belonging to the Comintern as full members is not any better: it excludes both the Salvadorian and the Guatemalan parties, the latter being founded after the dissolution of the Comintern.[28] About all one can say is that there were six sections (or would-be sections) of the Comintern in what is properly South America: Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela; and four in Central America: Panama, El Salvador, Guatemala and Costa Rica.

Paraguay. It is not easy to find information about the Paraguayan section of the Comintern, as that party was illegal during most of the period: an American diplomat speaks in 1943 of Communism in Paraguay more as a very useful spectre for anti-Communists in the government than as a reality.[29] The list published by the South

American Secretariat prior to the Buenos Aires Conference indicates that it had been founded in 1927, and had joined the Comintern a year later. One of its leaders, Ibarola, had been sent as delegate to the Sixth World Congress.[30] But at the meeting of Buenos Aires, Codovilla said that the SSA mistakenly thought that there was a Communist Party already formed in Paraguay, and another source indicates that it did not celebrate its first Conference until 1934;[31] which could be true as the Comintern accepted as full members parties that could not be considered as having been actually established anywhere but on paper. For a long time, the Paraguayan Communist Party has been known abroad more for the protracted suffering of their militants in the gaols of their country than for having a real relevance in the political scene of Paraguay; dominated as it has been by military strongmen.[32]

Bolivia. In 1929, the Bolivian Communists were reported as 'sympathisers' of the Communist International, but not yet a Communist Party; they worked inside the so-called Labour Party. Even though the Russian Revolution and the Comintern spread their influence among Bolivian intellectuals and workers as well, the Bolivian Communists never succeeded in forming their own party before the dissolution of the Comintern.[33]

Peru. The Communists of Peru never had much importance in the Comintern, if one is to judge by their achievements as a party. Ironically, their importance comes, so to speak, from outside. They are able to claim that their origins can be found in the thought of a man who never belonged to the party (which was, in fact, founded after his death) and who was opposed to openly launching a Communist Party: José Carlos Mariátegui. The Peruvian Communists were the perennial foes of one of the most influential ideological streams in Latin America: the APRA. Their one-time General Secretary, Eudocio Ravines, after breaking with them, wrote a book, *The Yenan Way*, which became for years the Bible of the most paranoid right-wing anti-Communists on the continent.[34]

Ecuador. Founded by 1925 as the Socialist Party by left-wing intellectuals who broke away from the Liberal Party, its brilliant leader, Dr Ricardo Paredes, went to Moscow in 1927, invited to the tenth anniversary celebration of the October Revolution. He also attended the Sixth Congress of the Comintern and asked for a 'fraternal' membership of his party in the International, which was granted. It is to be noted that Paredes went to that Congress as representative both of the Socialist Party and the incipient Communist Party of Ecuador, the latter not having been founded yet. At the rostrum of the Sixth Congress, Paredes

delivered some of the longest and most fruitful speeches ever made by a Latin American before a meeting of the Comintern: he is credited as being the author of the concept of 'dependent' countries in addition to the concepts of 'colonial' and 'semi-colonial' countries which were till then the only ones used by the Communists when dealing with non-European peoples.[35] In 1931, the Party completed its 'bolshevisation', taking the name of Communist Party. In spite of its relatively small size, during the period of the Comintern and in its immediate aftermath, this party succeeded in getting control of the labour movement and, *rara avis* in the international Communist movement, to maintain after 1934 a friendly relationship for twenty years with the Ecuadorian Socialist Party. In 1944, in one of those victorious *coups d'état* of national union which briefly united right-wingers with left-wingers, the Communist Party was called to join the revolutionary government, and one of its leaders entered the *junta*.[36]

Colombia. Together with the Socialist Party of Ecuador, the Socialist Revolutionary Party of Colombia applied for membership of the Comintern in 1928.[37] It had been founded by a labour conference in 1926 and the following year it voted to affiliate with the Comintern. In 1930, with the active participation of the ECCI, it became the Communist Party, losing henceforth all importance as a political force in its country. The highest point in its history was the strike of the banana workers in 1928, in which one of the members of the Party, the Anarcho-syndicalist Raúl Mahecha, played an important role[38] and which became a legendary event in the history of the labour movement in Latin America.[39] The lowest point was reached in 1944, when carrying 'Browderism' to its ultimate consequences, it adopted the previously despised name of 'Democratic Socialist Party'. There is no evidence to support Alexander's contention that the Communist Party of Colombia became very active in the Comintern.[40]

Venezuela. A tiny handful of reckless students met some groups of militants pompously[41] calling themselves Communist Party of Venezuela, Venezuelan Section of the Communist International and tried to distribute a first manifesto on May Day of 1931.[42] Some weeks later, they were arrested and incarcerated for many years. In the Comintern, the Venezuelan Communists were probably better known for their failures than for their achievements until 1935. In 1929, one of them, Gustavo Machado, together with an adventurer (self-designated 'general' Rafael Simón Urbina) seized the Netherlands colony of Curaçao, close to the Venezuelan coast, in order to invade his country, where he was bloodily defeated.[43] His brother Eduardo was once jailed

in the United States.[44] After accepting them as a section of the Comintern in 1935, the International Control Commission, its disciplinary body, chose the Venezuelan Communist Party for an exemplary expulsion, perhaps the most publicized one in the whole history of the Comintern. It involved a couple of very young militants whose behaviour when facing the police had been cowardly.[45]

In spite of the relative unimportance of the Venezuelan section, the Comintern had, among its most longlasting bureaucrats, a Venezuelan, Ricardo A. Martínez, who, under the apparent protection of Codovilla, spent practically all his active political life working for the Comintern. He returned to Venezuela in the late thirties or early forties; in 1950 he broke off with the party.[46]

Panama. A Panamanian delegation went to the meeting of Buenos Aires in 1929. They represented a so-called 'Labour Party' in which the Communists of that country worked; they also had a newspaper.[47] Other than that, there is really very little evidence of the existence of a section of the Comintern in Panama, and nothing to support the affirmation that it had been accepted in the Comintern as a 'fraternal' party.[48]

El Salvador. Agustín Farabundo Martí was a young Salvadorian Communist, who had been very close to the Nicaraguan hero, Augusto C. Sandino, before breaking with him for political reasons (and not, as Communists said *sotto voce* at the time, because of problems of corruption). In 1931, he founded a Communist Party in a country which was not only the smallest of continental Latin America, but also one of the most overpopulated and impoverished. With apparently strong sympathy if not overt support among peasants and soldiers, the Communists of El Salvador attempted a foolhardy insurrection. Even though it was crushed at the very start, the upheaval was followed by one of the bloodiest repressions ever known in Latin America. Martí himself not only had to endure severe torture but was shot. Before going to face the firing squad, Martí wrote a letter clearing Sandino of all suspicion of corruption: their split, said Martí, was due only to political differences.[49]

This revolt of early 1932 was the first Communist insurrection in the Western hemisphere. Nevertheless, it could be said that, unlike the Brazilian uprising of 1935, the Comintern had practically nothing to do with it. As far as is known, it seems to have been a spontaneous initiative of the Salvadorian Communists. Indeed, it was the Salvadorian tyranny of Maximiliano Martínez which received 'international' help: the plans for the insurrection had fallen into the hands of the Guatemalan police, who immediately notified their neighbour.[50]

Guatemala. One of the first articles published in the Comintern organ *Inprecorr* was a letter sent by the Mexican Communists to their comrades of Guatemala, urging them to form a party, and the reply to that letter.[51] A Guatemalan delegation attended the meeting of Buenos Aires. Some sources list the Communist Party of Guatemala as having been accepted as a section of the Comintern in 1924, but there is no evidence.[52] In truth, the Guatemalan Communists played practically no role in the life of the Latin American Comintern. Their star began to rise after 1944, when the dictatorship of Ubico was ousted. They succeeded then in having a strong influence during the régime of Jacobo Arbenz, who was overthrown with the open help of the United States in 1954.[53]

Costa Rica. The Communist Party of Costa Rica was not present at the meeting of Buenos Aires; it was founded several months later. Nonetheless, the Communists in that small and traditionally liberal country succeeded in organizing, what was for a long time during the existence of the Comintern, the most important party of Central America, and one of the most successful in the continent. For some time, its political and organizational successes have been alleged to be the result of the work of Rómulo Betancourt, a Venezuelan exile who later founded the Venezuelan Party 'Democratic Action' and was twice president of his country. In 1935, the Costa Rican Party was accepted in the Comintern.[54]

Besides these parties – of which only a few deserve the name – there were no other organizations in the remaining countries of South and Caribbean America. In the Dominican Republic, the arrival of a large number of refugees from Spain after the defeat of the Republic helped to spread the ideas of Marxism in the island, but even though they were not harassed, they were unable to do much under the strongman Trujillo. In Haiti, one of the most famous writers of the island proclaimed himself a Communist, but he seems to have had few adherents.[55] There were a tiny handful of militants in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Puerto Rico, but nothing looking like a party, still less a 'bolshevised' one.

Meetings of the Latin American sections

To the wariness of the Comintern concerning all kinds of 'horizontal' contacts among its sections, one must also take into consideration the immensity of the Latin American continent and the few means of communication among the various countries, which hindered any attempt of the Latin American sections or groups of sympathisers to meet. In any case, there seems not to have been more than four or five

such meetings in twenty-four years, and only three of them were considered official, in the sense of being reported in the organs of the Comintern.

Ten years of the October Revolution

Perhaps the first opportunity the Communists from the north and the south of Latin America had of meeting was in 1927, when some of them went to Moscow to attend the celebrations of the ten years of the October Revolution. Even though there is no official announcement of a meeting in 1927, it has to be assumed that it occurred, because in December, some Latin Americans who belonged to the Red International of Labour Unions met there, and their meeting was publicly announced.[56] As most of those labour leaders were Communists or sympathizers of the Comintern, particularly in Latin America, it would be understandable if the International had used the occasion to gather its followers to discuss a common policy. Concerning the list of people who attended this meeting, the different sources are not only contradictory, but inaccurate.[57] In spite of what Alexander says, it is almost impossible that Mella from Cuba and Astrojildo Pereira from Brazil were there.[58] There is no direct evidence that the Mexican, David Alfaro Siqueiros was there even though he probably was.[59]

What can be said, then, about that meeting, is that some Latin American Communists met for the first time in 1927 at Moscow, where they had come to attend either the celebration of the 'Tenth October' or a meeting of the Red International of Labour Unions. The meeting was perhaps attended by Communists from Argentina (Codovilla), Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador (Ricardo Paredes), Peru, Venezuela (Ricardo A. Martínez), and Mexico (Siqueiros?). One year later, the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern gathered a bigger delegation from Latin America, but there is no evidence of an additional or separate meeting of Latin American Communists.

The Conference of Buenos Aires

This is not only the most important meeting of the Latin American sections of the Comintern, but perhaps the only one which could be considered as such. It might also be said that, had the Comintern leaders attended this meeting in a different mood; that is, had they been eager to learn the real situation of Latin America and to draw realistic conclusions from the discussions, this meeting could have been the most

fruitful for the purpose of Latin American and world revolution which the Comintern was supposed to foment. It was not. The conference was held between the 1st and 12th of June, 1929. Fifteen countries were summoned, but not a single delegate came from Chile; they said it was because of the 'white terror'. Some weeks later, the organ of the South American Secretariat, *La Correspondencia Sudamericana*, published this table of the parties represented there:

Section	Date of Foundation	Date of joining the Comintern
CP of Argentina (8 delegates)	1918 (a)	1919
CP of Brazil (4 delegates)	1921	1922
CP of Bolivia (2 delegates)	1929	(1)
CP of Colombia (3 delegates)	1927	1928
CP of Chile	1921 (b)	1922
CP of Cuba (3 delegates)	1925	1926
CP of Ecuador (SP) (3 delegates)	1926 (c)	1928
CP of El Salvador (2 delegates)	1927	(2)
CP of Guatemala (2 delegates)	1922	1924
CP of Mexico (2 delegates)	1919	1921
CP of Panama (LP) (2 delegates)	1927	(3)
CP of Paraguay (1 delegate)	1927	1928
CP of Peru (2 delegates)	1928	(4)
CP of Uruguay (3 delegates)	1920 (d)	1921
CP of Venezuela	1927	(5)

This table was completed with the following information: the parties marked with numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) had to be considered as sympathiser parties of the Comintern, in the process of adapting themselves to the ideology and structure of the Communist Parties. It was said also that the parties marked with letters had the following origin: (a) Left wing of the Socialist Party of Argentina, forming a Communist Party in 1918; (b) ex-Socialist Party, which in 1921 joined the CI as a block; (c) ex-Socialist Party, which in 1926 joined the CI as a block; (d) ex-Socialist Party, which in 1920 expelled the reformists and joined the CI.

An idea of the 'social composition' of the meeting was also given: 51% workers; 11% peasants; 9% trade employees; 10% liberal professions; 19% party functionaries, coming from different social strata. There were also delegates from the Communist Parties of the United States and France, representatives of the South American Secretariat of

both the Comintern and the Young Communist International, and representatives of the ECCI and the YCI.[60]

The representative of the ECCI was Jules Humbert-Droz ('Luis') whose knowledge of Latin America was so profound as to surprise Ravines.[61] The delegate from the YCI was 'Peter', whose intelligence and cleverness, shown in his discussion with the Venezuelan Martínez on racial problems,[62] serves to possibly identify him as the 'Pierre' named by Humbert-Droz as well as by Ravines in their memoirs,[63] with the added coincidence of names (Peter–Pierre). From the delegates of the South American Secretariat, only two names are given as such: Codovilla and Eugenio Gómez from Uruguay.[64] Ghioldi, who since 1927 had been announced as being a member of that secretariat, and who was also announced as having taken part in the Conference, did nothing. The representative of the YCI's Secretariat for South America was Edmundo Guitor.[65]

The composition of the Conference merits some comments. Nothing is said about the rights of each one of the delegates present. Did they have effective votes or simply deliberative? Which ones had which rights? The question arises because the parties marked from 1 to 5 were, at this moment, 'organizations' which did not exist even on paper. For example, there is not the least evidence of the existence, in Venezuela or among exiles, of a single group which called itself or pretended to be a Communist Party, even in embryo.[66]

About one of every five delegates (19%) was a 'party functionary'. At that moment, the word *apparatchik* had not yet the strongly deprecatory meaning that it has today, but nevertheless, it seems there were a huge quantity of them in such a small group. Those *apparatchiks* depended both politically and financially on the leadership, two reasons for being obliged to the strictest loyalty. Moreover, it helped to assure the domination of the strongest party, which at that moment meant Argentina, i.e., Codovilla.

There is also some obscurity concerning the dates of foundation of the different parties. The information published in *La Correspondencia Suramericana* should be the most trustworthy, being given in the official source. It is not, however. Not only in the case of the Venezuelan party is the information given notoriously false, but also in the case of the Paraguayan party. Even the Brazilian Communist Party, which sent a delegate to ask directly for affiliation with the Comintern, is said here to have been formed a year before in fact it was.[67] Concerning the date when these parties joined the Comintern, the term used is, perhaps deliberately, ambiguous: 'adhesion' does not clearly indicate if they had

actually been accepted by the Comintern as full members; some of them were in fact classified as mere 'sympathisers'.

These are not simple details, irrelevant to the overall picture. As is normal with all parties, the Comintern had a tendency to inflate the numbers of its adherents. On the other hand, it had a very prestigious precedent: the forming of the Comintern itself, that is, the so-called 'First' Congress, was nothing more than a meeting of refugees, where the representative of the only real party, Eberlein, from Germany, went to Moscow to oppose the founding of the International (at least until the victory of revolution in Germany). But this way of manipulating the representativeness of parties and delegations, added to the strength or the weight of the *apparatchiks* in the meeting, as well as that of the Argentinian delegation, assured Codovilla of the possibility of getting rid of any dissidence. This was not, however, the real problem, because the Conference had not the power of voting mandatory decisions.[68] The real problem is that by such manipulations, the Comintern showed that it was less interested in becoming better informed about the Latin American situation than in imposing its views in the most rigid way possible, disregarding the real context, the real social and political situation.

As usual, the agenda of the meeting was heavily loaded. However, it must be said that not only was it completely discussed, but also that the discussion was very open. Being the first, it was also to be the last: the Comintern had arrived at a turning point, and a discussion of this kind was never to be seen again. The agenda included about ten points: (1) the international situation of Latin America and the war danger; (2) anti-imperialist struggle and the problems of tactics of the Communist Parties of Latin America; (3) trade unions; (4) the peasants; (5) the problem of race in Latin America; (6) the work of the Anti-Imperialist League; (7) the youth movement and the tasks of the Communist Parties; (8) organizational problems; (9) the work of the South American Secretariat; (10) report on the crisis of the Argentinian Communist Party and its solution. Points 1, 2 and 5 were the most widely discussed. If it is easy to understand why the discussion of the international situation as well as the problem of tactics of the Communist Parties took up so much time, the same thing cannot be said about points such as the 'racial' problem, which could be considered if not secondary, at least as being too restricted *vis à vis* the peasant question, or the question of trade unions or the anti-imperialist struggle.

Some explanation resides in the fact that through this problem, the leaders of the Comintern were actually discussing the theoretical basis of

the organization that would later become one of the most important rivals of Communism in the Latin American Left: the APRA. As a matter of fact, the longest discussion in that conference came up over the thesis proposed by the Peruvians, which had been written by their theoretician and leader, José Carlos Mariátegui.[69] As Mariátegui had drafted, besides the paper on the 'racial' question, two others concerning the anti-imperialist struggle and a reasoned opposition to the founding of a Communist Party (at least with such a name) in Peru, the results of the conference have been considered more or less a defeat for Mariátegui.

Two more reasons, however, could be given for the apparently disproportionate importance given to this subject in the conference. The first one was that in the 1920s, this problem of 'race' was one to which the Comintern paid great attention but mainly related to the so-called 'Negro question' in the United States, which was considered, as has been already mentioned, the Achilles heel of American capitalism. At the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, the Mexican delegate (the Italian, Vittorio Vidali) put forward this problem putting the accent as much on the so-called 'Indians' as on the people of African origin.[70]

The second reason is, perhaps, the rising star of Stalin, not just as a mere Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, but also as the 'great theoretician', the 'second Lenin' and all the other titles which would be heaped upon him in the following years. Stalin was already considered as the theoretical master concerning the 'national question', and, of course, the 'federal' solution given to that problem in the USSR was viewed as his own. The fact is that, overriding the opposition of the Peruvians (i.e. Mariátegui), the 'federation' was the solution proposed by the representative of the Comintern, Humbert-Droz.[71] It was also the 'solution' which would later be proposed and insisted upon to ridiculous extremes by the Argentinian, Rodolfo Ghioldi: the idea of forming Italian, Polish and Jewish nations with the immigrants in Argentina![72]

The 'third' Conference of Montevideo

On May 20, 1935, *The Communist International* announced that the 'Third Conference of the Communist Party of South and Caribbean America' had been held in Montevideo in October 1934.[73] This is the only news referring to the conference. There are, however, many reasons to think that it may never have met in Montevideo. The first is that with the single exception of a Soviet historian, A. I. Sobolev,[74] no official history of the Communist Parties of Latin America mentions such a

meeting.[75] Moreover, the Communist Party of Uruguay (which would have had many reasons to be proud of such an achievement by its organization, overriding the problems the party was experiencing at that moment) has never mentioned it.[76]

Secondly, at the same time as the meeting supposedly held in Montevideo, a lot of very important leaders of the Communist parties of Latin America (those who would have been present at a conference of such importance) were in Moscow, where they arrived for the Seventh World Congress, which had been postponed too late to have informed the American parties in time. The Latin American sections, and perhaps the Comintern itself (which had to endure at this moment a big defeat in Germany with the levelling of its headquarters in Berlin), would not have found it possible to hold two congresses of Communists almost simultaneously, one in Moscow, another in Montevideo.

Thirdly, it is very strange that a conference of such importance, because it marked a tactical turning point (from the sectarianism of the 'third period' to the Popular Front), would have been held without producing at the end of its discussions any kind of manifesto. The article published in the theoretical organ of the Comintern was not a manifesto, and its authors did not indicate in any way that the article should be taken as such. Why the Third Conference? There is not the least evidence in all the Comintern propaganda that a 'Second' meeting of the Communist Parties of Latin America had ever been held, in Moscow, in Latin America or elsewhere.

Given all these conditions it is possible that the 'Montevideo' conference met indeed, but in Moscow. It coincides, by its agenda, with the one described by Ravines in his memoirs.[77] In any case, this 'conference' if ever it took place as such, matches very well with the secrecy which seems to be the mood of the Latin American Comintern after the Conference of Buenos Aires and the transfer of powers from the hands of the former South American Secretariat to those of the 'bureau' of Guralsky and his 'flying brigade'. According to the only source available on this conference, it 'concentrated its attention chiefly on the questions of the tactics and revolutionary strategy of the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution'.[78] The accent was to be on the struggle against imperialism. It is perhaps the first time that the formula of 'agrarian anti-imperialist revolution' substitutes for that of 'democratic bourgeois'. On the other hand, it is not a question of discussing matters of principle, as was done in 1929, but mostly, if not exclusively, matters of tactics.

The fact is that the Comintern seemed to consider the first period of

development of the Latin American Communist parties as having terminated. That was the period when 'Agitation and propaganda work was the prevailing form of work, corresponding to the period of consolidation of the Communist Parties of South and Caribbean America, when they had as yet very little contact with the worker and peasant masses'. Now they must turn 'to the organization and leadership of the revolutionary battles'[79] and, of course, in those conditions, it is not useful to engage in theoretical discussions, less still if such discussions mislead those parties, as in 1929, causing them to fall into 'a number of very big mistakes in the formulation of these questions'.[80]

There are other aspects which are also worth emphasizing about the conclusions of this conference. Taking imperialism as the main target, the delegates insisted on the fact that 'the national liberation struggle against imperialism has brought forward the necessity of organizing the national revolution quite sharply by systematically drawing the broadest national masses into the struggle against imperialism and its agents at home, and thus forming the widest anti-imperialist front'.[81] All this jargon means mostly that the Communist Parties had to switch from extremely sectarian tactics to broadly inclusive ones, which would allow them not only to change from small groups for propaganda and agitation to mass parties, but furthermore, to be able to reach the 'broadest national masses'. In other words, to give up the harsh sectarianism of the 'third period' to enter the Popular Front.

Such a tactical reversal needed an explanation, because in Latin America the necessity of such a U-turn was not so evident as in Europe, where the triumph of Nazism in Germany showed these new tactics to be primarily a simple matter of survival. Such an explanation needed in the first place, some self-criticism. The Third International had to avow that policies of the so-called 'third period' were not only mistaken, but furthermore, suicidal. But the Comintern had reached a moment in which, as its leader (Stalin) was undoubtedly a farsighted genius, it was impossible for him to make mistakes, and this condition was shared by the Comintern. In this case, the Comintern found a solution to the problem by sticking to the decisions of the Sixth World Congress of 1928, but charging its particular sections with the 'mistakes' and 'deviations' from what was a generally correct outline.[82] This position would later become the traditional way of resolving not only the internal problems within the Communist parties, but all inconsistencies derived from the tactical turning points which so often led the Communists from one extreme to the other.

The third fact which merits emphasis is the strong accent put on

Brazil and Cuba (and to a lesser extent, Peru) as perhaps the leading areas of Latin American revolution in the near future: 'taking the uneven development of the revolutionary movement in the South American and Caribbean countries into account, and the concrete conditions of each country, the Conference placed these tasks firmly before the countries which are rapidly approaching the national liberation, anti-imperialist revolution (Brazil and Peru), or which have already embarked on this revolution (Cuba)'.[83] Here, the most important aspect to be taken into account is the fact of having recognized, perhaps for the first time, the 'uneven' development of revolution in the Latin American countries.

Finally, mention is made of Brazil and Cuba (and Peru), but nothing is said about Chile. Given this fact, the already mentioned testimony of Ravines is somehow weakened. He says that at the meeting in Moscow, a somewhat Solomonian compromise was voted: to try the 'pacific' way of seizing power through the Popular Front and elections, and at the same time to try with insurrection, the two 'guinea pigs' being Chile and Brazil.[84] All this assuming, of course, that the 'Montevideo' meeting was actually held in Moscow. But even if this were not the case, it is hardly believable that two contemporary meetings of the same parties could reach such different conclusions.

A 'Fourth' meeting of Communist Parties in the United States

With all these uncertainties, the so-called 'Conference of Montevideo' was the last known meeting of the Latin American sections of the Comintern. But in July 1939, a conference took place in New York. There the General Secretaries of the Communist Parties of the United States, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Mexico and Venezuela issued a manifesto printed in the monthly organ of the Communist Party of the United States, *The Communist*,[85] signed by Earl Browder (CPUSA), Tim Buck (CP of Canada); Carlos Contreras Labarca (CP of Chile); 'Blas Roca' (Francisco Calderío, *alias*) (CP of Cuba); Hernan Laborde (CP of Mexico); 'Juan Pirela' (Juan Bautista Fuenmayor, *alias*) (CP of Venezuela). This manifesto was the only result of this conference, for a few weeks after its publication, came the Nazi–Soviet Pact, the invasion of Poland and the beginning of World War II. Some elements of that meeting are nevertheless worth highlighting.

Why those parties? The conference was summoned by the Communist Party of the United States, and with two exceptions (Canada and Chile), the meeting could be considered one of the former (and by this time, already dissolved) Caribbean Bureau of the Comintern. The

addition of the Canadian Communist Party might be somewhat understandable, but why Chile? Why not, for instance, the Colombian Party which was not very important in its country but undoubtedly more so than the Venezuelan, an underground and very young and inexperienced organization? These are not rhetorical questions, because Chile sent its General Secretary, but the Argentinian Party was not represented, even though Codovilla may well have been in America at the time, according to Ravines;[86] perhaps Venezuela may also have already been represented, if Ricardo Martínez was as usual in America.

The main target of the Comintern in America had changed, if compared with the 'Montevideo' Conference: instead of imperialism, the enemy is fascism. The meeting was summoned, says the manifesto 'with the object of finding improved methods for cooperation among all democratic forces in our hemisphere for struggle against aggression by the fascist powers and for the defense of peace and the freedom of our peoples'.[87] This change of target was not simply that, but in fact the defence of the former enemy: the manifesto boasted the 'unity of the people of Latin America with the North American people, and cooperation with the Roosevelt Administration for the consistent application of a democratic Good Neighbor policy'.[88]

There was another enemy, perhaps as strong and dangerous as fascism: Trotskyism. The manifesto says that 'The struggle against Trotskyism and for the unity of the working class and the people is the duty of all those who aspire to see our hemisphere free of fascism and war'.[89] Finally, the signatories of the manifesto 'deem it necessary to take the initiative in calling an international conference of all the Communist Parties of the Americas to be held in the near future'.[90]

It is interesting to compare the results of this conference with that of Buenos Aires in 1929. At the end of the First Conference, it seemed that the power of the South American Secretariat had been reinforced, thanks to its most brilliant achievement, the meeting itself. Instead, some months later this secretariat was dissolved. After the conference of New York, it seemed that the struggle against fascism would have political primacy and that the authority of the leadership of the Communist Parties signatories of the manifesto would be reinforced with the international support of the Comintern. Scarcely a month later, the Nazi–Soviet Pact and the war turned everything upside down, and the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Mexico, Hernán Laborde, who had signed the manifesto, was dethroned. Not only did the Conference of Communist Parties of the Americas never take place, but the Comintern itself began silently to die.

PART TWO

The theory comes after

4

The discovery of America

In 1928, the Comintern made 'the discovery of America' as its leaders said. They were not people given to using *mots d'esprit*, and more than a debatable sense of humour, what the expression revealed was a conception of world historical development and the role of the International in that process. That is, Socialism had to follow the steps of capitalism some four centuries before and thus departing from Europe, should land first in Asia and later in America.

The leaders of the Comintern also wanted to indicate that they had discovered both the United States as a world power and the revolutionary potentialities of the Latin American societies. The United States was a country they felt themselves able to understand as it was an industrialized capitalist society, but in Latin America they were landing in unknown territory. Notwithstanding their lack of knowledge, the Comintern proposed to the inhabitants that they begin a revolutionary process (a euphemism for plain revolution) before knowing what kind of societies they were dealing with, and therefore, what kind of revolution those societies needed. It is easy to understand why the Comintern behaved in this way toward Latin America. Far distant from the centre of world revolution, its revolutionary process was conceived initially as a consequence of European revolution, and as a 'support' of the proletarian revolution there and in the United States. Only when the Comintern arrived at the conclusion that world revolution was not *ad portas*, did it begin to show interest in these third stage societies.

In these circumstances, the political significance of the historical periodization of the Comintern's history mentioned in Chapter 1 also applies to Latin America. But its significance would depend not only upon the different policies voted at the World Congress or by the ECCI, but also upon the degree of knowledge of the continent gathered by the leaders of the Comintern. Thus, the process of discovering America from the theoretical viewpoint, the process of forming an 'image' of

Latin America and of proposing a Marxist definition of those societies, can be studied taking 1928 as the central point. That is, before and after the Leninist 'discovery of America'.

From Lenin to Bukharin

The founder and chief of the Third Communist International, Lenin, seldom spoke about Latin America. As a matter of fact, he seemed to pay much less attention to those countries than did his masters Marx and Engels. Even if the founders of the First and Second Internationals were interested in the area as historians and journalists rather than as revolutionary chiefs, the fact is that they wrote more on Latin America in the 1840s and 1860s than did Lenin half a century later.[1]

Besides some minor references to Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, the longest mention Lenin made about the area was in his popular pamphlet *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*:

> We have already referred to one form of dependence – the semicolony. An example of another is provided by Argentina. 'South America, and especially Argentina', writes Schulze-Gaevernitz in his work on British Imperialism, 'is so dependent financially on London that it ought to be described as almost a British commercial colony.' Basing himself on the report of the Austro-Hungarian Consul at Buenos Aires for 1909, Schilder estimates the amount of British capital invested in Argentina at 8.750 million francs. It is not difficult to imagine what strong connections British finance capital (and its faithful 'friend' diplomacy) thereby acquires with the Argentina bourgeoisie, with the circles that control the whole of that country's economic and political life.[2]

What is interesting in this text of Lenin's is his mention of 'another' form of dependence besides colonies and semi-colonies. There is not much elaboration; therefore, what Lenin meant by this additional form of dependence can be found only by inference.

In the same pamphlet, Lenin spoke of colonies owned by the great powers in Africa, Polynesia, Asia and America. He spoke also of 'semi-colonies', in which category he placed 'Persia, China and Turkey: the first of these countries is already almost completely a colony, the second and third are becoming such'.[3] And finally, he spoke of small states which although possessing colonies, were nonetheless subjected to some form of dependence: the case of Portugal was an example to which he particularly referred. But when speaking of Argentina, what he wanted to underline was that 'finance capital and its foreign policy, which is the struggle of the great powers for the economic and political division of the world, gives rise to a number of *transitional* forms of state

dependence'.[4] The key to the whole sentence is in the word *transitional*. For Lenin, the two poles in contemporary imperialism are the great colonial powers and the colonies. In the same manner that Marx saw the petty-bourgeoisie becoming proletarian in moments of crisis instead of becoming big bourgeois, Lenin saw those countries located in what he called 'the middle stage' evolving into plain colonies, not becoming independent.

That was practically all Lenin had to say regarding Latin America. 'Manuel Gómez', our well-known American, Frank Seaman,[5] claimed that Lenin was concerned with Latin America, but in fact only recalls that Lenin 'was not interested in the socialist movement in Mexico. He realized at once that it was bound to be very rudimentary. But he was interested in the masses of the people in Mexico, in their relation with the United States – whether there was a strong opposition movement to the United States – and he was also very anxious to know whether there was an indigenous movement in Mexico'.[6] There is no other source for thinking that Lenin may have had a real interest in the area. On the contrary, when drawing up his 'colonial thesis' for the Second World Congress of the Comintern, Lenin asked his comrades to give him opinions, amendments, and addenda relating to these questions. He listed many countries, and even asked for an opinion on the 'Negroes in America'. But he asked for nothing on Latin America.[7]

In this same year, 1920, a brief reference was made to the area. At the Congress of the Peoples of the East at Baku, for the first time in the history of the Communist International (and perhaps for the first time in this century) John Reed, the celebrated author of *Ten Days that Shook the World*, made a speech that linked the fate of the colonial peoples of the East with that of the peoples of Latin America.[8] But Lenin was not at Baku. However, there are two documents related to Latin America which were written when Lenin was still alive and which he may have seen. The first document is the more interesting.[9] It not only contains the first 'definition' of Latin America made by the Comintern, but its position is more radical than Lenin's. For the authors, there is no question of 'transitional' forms of state because those countries were already mere colonies.

For the Comintern, then, it was 'ridiculous' that Latin American countries continued to speak of their 'independence'. In the imperialist stage of capitalism, there is no independence for those small peoples. They are reduced to being vassals of the big states: in the economic realm, by commerce and the importation of capital; in politics, by means of the Monroe Doctrine. 'Where is the independence of these

peoples?' asked the manifesto. They are under the tutelage of the American government, by the force of weapons as in Central America, by unqualified diplomatic pressure and bloody intrigue as in Mexico. Their industries and their economic development are at the mercy of American finance. The conclusion was obvious:

> In fact, South America is a colony of the United States, a source of raw materials, of cheap manpower and, of course, of fabulous profits; its huge territory still unexploited is used as a market for American machines and for American capital, and as a field for exploitation by American industries.
>
> The necessity of adapting itself to the consequences of war has definitively transformed South America into a colony of the United States, but this is the consequence of all the previous developments.[10]

Besides all the problems arising from this 'colonial' condition, the manifesto continued, the agrarian question is 'capital' because in Latin America the agricultural economy is of primary importance, for 'even Argentina, the most developed country of South America from the capitalist viewpoint, has less than 400,000 industrial workers in a population of more than 8 millions'.[11]

But the fact of being colonies does not imply that the struggle of the Latin American peoples could be conceived only as a national action against the United States, but as a class action of the workers of both Americas against American imperialism, because 'The unity of the American movement will not lead directly to the revolution, but revolution will result from the unity coming as a consequence of the proletarian successes'.[12] It is hardly conceivable that a manifesto of such importance (not because it concerned Latin America, but also the United States) could be issued without the knowledge of Lenin. Two years later, the Comintern published another manifesto, 'To the workers and peasants of South America'.[13] At this moment, Lenin was very ill, and exactly a year after the issuing of this manifesto he died. It is not probable, then, that Lenin was directly involved in its preparation, nor did he comment on it.

The manifesto of 1923 is less clear than the preceding one in the characterization of Latin America. The fact merits emphasis because it was directed not to Americans in general, but to South America in particular. It can also be said that the influence of this manifesto in Latin America must have been very small. The Comintern had not the means to distribute it widely among the working masses of Latin America. But the manifesto does reveal the ideas that the Comintern had about the continent. In any case, it was the first time that the International

concerned itself with 'South America' as a particular area with specific problems.

As in the manifesto of 1921, this one views the American revolution as a single process, involving both the north and the south. It accentuated the importance of the United States and therefore somewhat reduced the importance of the Latin American revolutionary movement. The first sentence called on the workers and peasants of Latin America 'to prepare themselves for the class struggle and to support the revolutionary movement of the world proletariat'. The word to be underlined here is that of *support*: hereafter, and perhaps until the adventure of 1935 in Brazil, the Communist International never thought that a Communist-led revolution could begin in Latin America before Europe or Asia. Moreover, after the crushing of the rebellion of Prestes, in the world Communist movement, and particularly in Latin America, everybody had the same feeling. The transformation of the Fidel Castro's national-democratic uprising into a Marxist–Leninist revolution in the 1960s, came for them as the fall of tsarism in February 1917 came for the Russian revolutionaries: as a 'divine surprise'.

Another difference with the manifesto of 1921 is that, in spite of the fact that the manifesto was directed to the workers *and peasants*, the agrarian question was not raised. However, the only countries named in the document were 'Central America', Panama, Colombia, Venezuela and Peru. That is, countries where in the aftermath, both the Marxist theoretical analysis and the programmes of their Communist Parties showed the existence of an agrarian problem. But in this manifesto of 1923, even if the 'bourgeoisie' and the 'governing classes' of the Latin American countries are named in order to attack them several times, the existence of a strong class of landowners is not taken into consideration.

Even the domination of the United States over Latin America seems to be a fact less clearly established in this manifesto than in that of 1921. For the ECCI in 1923, the United States was 'trying' to extend its domain, but was encountering not only the resistance of the workers and peasants, but also the rivalry of other imperialist powers in the world: England, Japan. Finally, the manifesto did not differentiate between the Latin American and United States bourgeoisie: 'Fight', it said, 'against your own bourgeoisie and you will be fighting United States imperialism which represents the highest point of Capitalist reaction'.[14]

The following manifesto of the Comintern directed to Latin America was published in 1927. It was in reaction to the invasion of Nicaragua by United States forces. It can be said that it was directly provoked: the Secretary of State, Frank Billings Kellogg allegedly said that the

intervention 'was necessary for the fight against bolshevism and the Third International, to save civilization'. In this manifesto, the Latin American countries are not described as those simple colonies that the Comintern saw in 1921: 'North American Imperialism' it said in 1927, 'is discarding its democratic mask, and openly and cynically proclaiming its intention of turning the countries of Latin America into colonies. It took possession long ago of the natural wealth, the industry and the transport of Central and South America, and brought their governments into industrial and financial dependence . . .'

At this moment, for the Comintern the American variety had became 'the most shameless and strongest Imperialism' which incidentally had encountered the anti-imperialist policy of the Communist International precisely when the colonising plans of the United States were taking a more definite form. Finally, the Communist International returned to the formula used in 1920 by John Reed at Baku: 'the struggle of the peoples of Latin America for independence . . . is only a part of the universal struggle of the oppressed peoples against their imperialist oppressors, in which China, India and Central America occupy the central positions'.[15]

The red Columbus

And then in 1928 came the famous 'discovery of America'. The Sixth World Congress of the Comintern was dominated by two extra-European problems: the Chinese fiasco of 1927 and the fight of Nicaragua against the United States forces. On the other hand, it was also under the influence of the Russian fight for power: the Trotskyists had been defeated, and the chief of the International was Nikolai Bukharin. But this is not the only reason that the thesis on Latin America can be considered to reflect Bukharin's position. The man in charge of Latin American affairs in the ECCI, the man who presented at the congress a special report on the area was Jules Humbert-Droz, a confessed Bukharinist.

The most important aspect of this report is perhaps that the Comintern realized that the diverse situations of the Latin American countries did not allow them to be included within a single definition. Humbert-Droz not only pointed out this diversity, but he showed dissatisfaction with the label of 'semi-colonies' hung on those countries. He compared the situation of the French and British colonies of the Antilles, the Guianas and the small republics of Central America with the white-populated, urban and relatively developed countries of the

south of Latin America and noted 'a considerable difference in regard to the economic development, the political régime and the dependence or degree of colonization of these various countries'.[16] The 'semicolonies' label did not sit well with the Latin American Communists either, and Humbert-Droz told the Congress that

> In discussion with comrades from the various Latin American countries, we have at first rather lively controversies concerning the semi-colonial character of Latin America. As a rule, when we tell our Latin American comrades, on meeting them for the first time, that the situation of their country is that of a semi-colony and that consequently we must consider the problems concerning it from the viewpoint of our colonial or semi-colonial tactics, they are indignant at this notion and assert that their country is independent, that it is represented in the League of Nations, has its own diplomats, consulates, etc. I remember the difficulties we had with the representative of the Party of Cuba, one of the most typical colonies of Yankee imperialism. For a long time this comrade would not agree with us that Cuba is a semi-colony of Yankee imperialism.[17]

The reluctance of the Cuban Communist Party could be considered as typical of peoples not used to the Marxist vocabulary. The fact is that the Communists of the Southern areas, which were more developed and more independent than Cuba, seemed to accept more easily the description of their countries as 'semi-colonies'. But Humbert-Droz perhaps remembered that Lenin himself avoided calling those countries 'semi-colonies'. In the attitude of these Latin America Communists mentioned by Humbert-Droz perhaps the background of the heroic mythology of the War of Independence played a role.[18] However, the most important question was raised by a Colombian delegate in the discussion of Humbert-Droz's report: that it was not easy to understand that Argentina could be a 'semi-colony' when it was in fact more independent than some Balkan countries which were labelled otherwise.[19]

Taking all that into consideration, Humbert-Droz was very cautious in his speech. He noted that the 40 per cent of American capital invested in Latin America did not make these countries colonies of the United States, because a strong stream of American capital did not make Germany a colony. On the other hand, there was the example of Ecuador: in this country there was a growing commercial interchange, political control and even the sending of 'financial experts', but Ecuador was otherwise free of heavy American investments. Furthermore, if the Latin American countries must be labelled colonies or semi-colonies, they were a particular kind of 'colony', because there were no capitulations, no viceroys, even if some American Ambassadors played this

role. Additionally, imperialist exploitation does not hinder industrialization, even though it does not stimulate the development of a class of independent capitalists.[20]

The speech of Humbert-Droz merits close attention. He is practically denying the existence of a native bourgeois class in Latin America. He was not alone in this opinion. At the same meeting, another member of the Latin Secretariat, Travin, expressed his belief that there was not, in Latin America, even a bourgeoisie of *compradores*, as the Chinese called those merchants who dealt with the export and import typical of colonial products.[21] On the other hand, as Humbert-Droz stated, in many of those countries there was no struggle between the industrial bourgeoisie and the landlords, for they were often the same person or at least were 'part and parcel of the class of landed proprietors'.[22]

Besides the report of Humbert-Droz, there are the so-called 'Theses' on the revolutionary movement in the colonies and semi-colonies proposed by the ECCI to the delegates at the Sixth World Congress. For the authors of the 'Theses':

> The growing economic and military expansion of North American imperialism in the countries of Latin America is transforming this continent into one of the most important focal points of antagonism within the colonial system. The influence of Great Britain, which before the war was decisive in these countries, and reduced many of them to the position of semi-colonies, is, since the war, being replaced by their still closer dependence on the United States.[23]

Then the 'Theses' went farther than Humbert-Droz, because if under the British domination those countries were mostly 'semi-colonies', when passing under control of the United States they developed a 'still closer dependence': became plain colonies, then.

These positions were bound to provoke reactions among some Latin American delegates. It was not only a question of not understanding, as Humbert-Droz claimed in his report. Returning to the idea of Lenin, although not directly quoting him, the delegate of both the socialist and Communist parties of Ecuador, Ricardo Paredes, expressed his belief that

> It is clear that one cannot establish a strict classification between so-called semi-colonial countries because there is a considerable number of intermediary forms. Therefore a new category must be accepted. This new group would consist of the 'dependencies' which have been penetrated economically by imperialism but which retain a certain political independence either because the economic penetration is not very strong or because they are strong politically.[24]

The proposition of Ricardo Paredes was not a mere question of labelling. It was linked to some particular problems concerning the class struggle. The distinction he proposed had to be made because 'hitherto the general conception of our countries has been that they are the "rural district of the world" which alters the problems of the struggle in these countries by under-estimating the proletariat and over-estimating the peasant question'.[25] If the opinion expressed by Paredes corresponded with reality, it is easy to understand that there was a significant confusion among Communists with regard to the class struggle in Latin America and the so-called 'character' of its revolution. As will be seen in the following chapter, the natural tendency among Leninists was exactly the contrary, that is, to under-estimate the revolutionary potentialities of the peasants and to over-estimate those of the urban proletariat.

The reasoning of Paredes went so far as to claim, when discussing the programme, that the slogan of an agrarian reform which took the land from the big landed proprietors to distribute it among the peasants, was not correct when applied to those 'dependent' countries.[26] Taking into consideration what the vast majority of the Comintern thought about the subject, the words of Paredes must have sounded almost heretical. The programmes of the Communist Parties in the aftermath of the Congress would have the question of land as the central point. But the fact is that in Latin America not a single revolutionary movement in this century can claim to have had the characteristics of an agrarian revolt, or (to use the language of the Comintern itself) of a revolt of the 'rural districts' surrounding and conquering (or 'liberating') the cities. The only exception, perhaps, is Mexico, but the Mexican Revolution preceded not only the foundation of the Comintern but also the Russian Revolution.[27]

After the discovery

In spite of the relative acceptance of the diversity of state forms of dependence, in spite of the relative acceptance of the formula of Paredes, after 1928 the Comintern had a tendency to use such formulas as 'dependency' less and, in fact, to put the accent on the 'semi-colonial' condition of the Latin American countries.

This fact can be observed at the first meeting of the Latin American Communists at Buenos Aires in 1929. Thus, when the delegates arrived at the conference, they received a document called 'Project of Thesis on the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America', which was 'prepared by the Latin American Commission of the Sixth Congress and accepted as a

base by the Presidium' of the ECCI.[28] This document stated that in spite of the already mentioned diversity, those countries showed nevertheless a lot of 'general common characteristics which allow us to make a common analysis'.[29] The War of Independence of those countries, the 'Thesis', continued, made them formally independent states but this fact has not determined 'their own independent capitalist development'.[30] In those countries, the United States was quickly obtaining hegemony, making Latin America 'a large colonial domain. The semi-colonial character of the Latin American countries, in spite of their formal political independence . . . is consequently evident'.[31]

According to the document this situation has several consequences. Agricultural production prevailed everywhere. It also meant that large property, in spite of its different modes of production, 'incorporated itself more and more in the capitalist imperialist system of exploitation of the workers and peasants, of the theft of Latin America by the different imperialisms, primarily Yankee imperialism'.[32] In those conditions, the authors of the 'Thesis' arrived at the conclusion that 'THE DOMINANT CLASS in almost all the countries of Latin America, its different forms of political power is then, THE CLASS OF BIG LANDED PROPRIETORS, SERVANTS THEMSELVES OR CLOSELY RELATED TO BRITISH OR AMERICAN IMPERIALISM'.[33]

The speech delivered by Vittorio Codovilla before his Latin American comrades at this conference, completed the above definitions by denying any real existence to a 'national' Latin American bourgeoisie. For Codovilla, the Latin American bourgeoisie was linked from its birth to imperialism, had been its agent, had helped it exploit the indigenous working masses. To the point, he said, that in such a state of 'deformation and dependence on the foreign market, any attempt to create a national independent economy within the framework of the bourgeois legality is doomed to fail'.[34]

The 'semi-colonial' character of the Latin American countries, ratified thus by Codovilla, was received less reluctantly by the Latin American Communists, unlike the situation in the Sixth Congress, a year before. Thus, Humbert-Droz could say in his speech before the conference that if at times he had had lively discussions with his Latin American comrades in order to convert them to the idea that their countries were 'dependent semi-colonies of British or American Imperialism', in 1929 it was no longer necessary 'to demonstrate those elementary truths. Every comrade, on the contrary, comes loaded with statistics in order to demonstrate the quantity of British or American financial capital in his own country, and to demonstrate its colonial or semi-colonial char-

acter'.[35] The final 'Resolution' of the Conference was somewhat less emphatic and stated that

> the Latin American countries are transforming themselves into colonies of imperialism, producing economic development only in some branches of production, those more convenient for imperialism. This production is, in addition, made by means of foreign capital or under its control, thus conserving their structure of agrarian countries and producers of raw materials.[36]

It can be said that with these documents and speeches the 'image' that the Comintern had of Latin America was completed, that there was concluded its 'discovery of America'. In the following years, the interest of the Comintern was centred more in tactical problems rather than in questions of theory. The only known theoretical document of the so-called 'South American Bureau' of the Comintern made a slight reference to the characteristics of the Latin American societies, speaking of the 'semi-slavery, semi-feudalist and capitalist condition of exploitation' of these countries.[37] There was not the least attempt to explain what it meant, nor was there the least attempt at elaboration.

When the Comintern summoned its Seventh and last Congress in 1935, there was no attempt to remake or to give more precision to the definition; the discussion turned on the necessity of forming the anti-imperialist Popular Front and the Latin American countries were either implicitly or explicitly included within the 'colonial and semi-colonial countries'.[38] Actually, the Comintern showed in this matter as in everything else that it was less concerned with the theoretical analysis of the history and class conditions of a given country or continent, than with the manner of bringing about revolution. As will be seen in the following chapters, for the Comintern the problem was less the 'discovery' of American than the 'conquest' of America.[39]

5

Latin America in the world revolution

The question of 'when'

When analysing the thinking of the Third International regarding world revolution, at least two facts are worth emphasizing. The first is that it is generally hard to know when Communists are speaking of 'revolution' as a theoretical issue and when as an active process. If less frequent, such an attitude is not completely absent among Latin American members of the Comintern. The second is the lack of a clear, unambiguous revolutionary proposal related to the extra-European world. The Comintern never produced as detailed a picture of the so-called democratic–bourgeois revolution as it did for the Socialist one. This is due perhaps to the fact that at the very moment of its foundation, the International already had the concrete example of a Socialist revolution to offer its followers. The primary intention of the Russian and European Communists in founding the Third International was to promote a Socialist revolution in Europe; to speak of the colonial world and of a democratic-bourgeois revolution was something of an afterthought. But there was perhaps another reason which was not dictated by a particular historical circumstance, but which is inherent in Marxism as well as Leninism. Roughly, it is that this stance was due to a perhaps exaggerated over-confidence in the strength of the proletariat and a corresponding distrust of the peasantry.

Another difficulty in catching the differences in the Communist language between revolution as a hope and revolution as a fact lies perhaps in the question of time and perspective. Seeing the whole process today, observers may perceive it as an open pair of scissors, the blades of which are increasingly separated, reflecting the current distance between the revolutionary propositions and the revolution itself. In fact, the Comintern never witnessed a victorious revolution,

for in Russia the revolution triumphed before its foundation. However, it can be said that the history of the Third International can hardly be understood without taking into consideration that, for Leninists, those scissors were by no means open; that they felt themselves at a moment of history when the hope for revolution and revolution itself were one and the same. This was the reason for the existence of the Comintern itself: the Socialist world revolution had already started and was not simply a future prospect. It was also the main reason for the 'practical' character of the Comintern programmes, as related in Chapter 1. The Third International was thus conceived as a very practical tool for acting in a process which had begun *before* its foundation.

Of course, it could also be said that the positions taken were mostly rhetorical. Perhaps when prophesying in 1919 that within a year Europe as a whole would be Communist, Zinoviev (who had publicly opposed the seizure of power in October) was moved by fears of again missing an appointment with history.[1] Nevertheless, those hopes were the same ones that Communists sustained everywhere, for almost a quarter of a century, in spite of several setbacks and defeats.

Five years later, in the draft programme of the organization, which was presented at the Fifth World Congress of the Comintern (1924), Bukharin saw a 'long period' between capitalism and Communism. He was obviously responding to the feeling that (with the stifling of both the German and Bulgarian uprisings of 1923) the 'first period' in the history of world revolution was closed. He was also speaking in the sad mood of all Leninists after the death of Lenin. However, his own description of such a period as one of 'decay of capitalism' and a 'struggle to the death' marked with 'victories and defeats of proletariat' with 'national wars and colonial insurrections', with 'armed and "pacific" competition' of capitalist and Socialist countries, was in some way the description of a war of positions.[2] Moreover, the impression given by Bukharin of fighting in a war already in progress, a *real* war (not merely a synonym for class struggle or political battles), was obvious everywhere in this text.

The 'last' revolution?

It was against such a background that the Comintern saw the Latin American revolution. But it could also be said that within the mainstream of world revolution, the Latin American process was seen by the theoreticians of the International from three different points of view:

as part of an 'American' (i.e., United States) revolution; as a typical colonial revolution; or as something more specific (i.e., Latin American).

In the previously cited article Zinoviev, for example, in 1919 saw the world revolution spreading from Europe to 'America and perhaps Asia and other continents'. The order is significant: when speaking of 'America', Zinoviev meant the United States. Thus, his was an orthodox view of Socialist revolution such as could have been conceived by Marx himself: starting in the most developed countries and, 'perhaps', following in the colonial world. Two years after this prophecy of Zinoviev, the Third International issued a manifesto 'to the workers of both Americas'.[3] So, after trying revolution in Europe (which was the main reason for founding the Comintern in 1919) and considering the colonial revolutions in its Second World Congress of 1920, Leninists turned in 1921 to view America as a specific problem and as a particular kind of revolutionary process.

The first thing that is worth noting in this manifesto is that it sees 'America' as the biggest danger to the freedom of all peoples and the liberation of the proletariat. At this very moment, the danger which menaces the Russian Revolution (as the centre of world revolution) is Great Britain. But danger represented by the United States is by no means a minor one, because Americans are safe from the economic viewpoint, financially powerful, spared in the political realm from the action of the proletariat. In those circumstances, taking into consideration that the United States (and the empire it could form with South America) would be the biggest power in history, it was already 'the heart of world reaction' and was preparing itself to become the 'gendarme' of the world bourgeoisie. Therefore, only the triumph of an American revolution could produce a triumphant world revolution. That is the logic of an orthodox Marxist revolutionary point of view, and it could be said that it merely repeated what Zinoviev, as chief of the Third International, had said.

But there is another issue that arises in the manifesto and it is perhaps the most important, for it points at what could be called the specificity of American conditions and the specificity of the American revolutionary process. It is the fact that revolution in North and South America is seen *as a single process*. When Latin America appears for the first time in a document of the Third International, when a particular analysis is done of its place in the context of world revolution and when a prognosis, so to speak, is outlined regarding the future of its revolution, it reflects, however, a view which could be called 'vertical' of the American

revolution. What is new is the conception of the American revolution as a specific process which had to involve North and South America. At the same time, it is expressed in an orthodox perspective: the process has to be led by the United States.

This manifesto more or less clearly expressed the two lines of thinking of the Communist movement concerning world revolution. It contained what can be called the 'Eurocentrist' point of view, as expressed in the First World Congress of 1919: the Socialist revolution should start in the more developed countries and it was not possible for the colonial world to obtain its liberation until the European proletariat had crushed its own bourgeoisie. It contained also the second position as expressed in its more extreme form by Roy at the Second Congress of 1920: that it was the loss of its colonies which would bring about the downfall of capitalism.

For the authors of the manifesto, if the unity of both Americas had not been considered up to that point, and if the old Socialist movement had not emphasized it, it was due to the fact that this movement was concerned only with elections and parliamentary conquests, and not with the revolutionary struggle of the masses. Now, they said, the consciousness of the unity of both Americas comes from the consciousness of the hegemony of American imperialism and of the necessity of a revolutionary struggle of the masses against it.[4]

Nevertheless, when speaking further of the tasks of Latin American revolutionaries, the problem was put in different terms: if the unity of both Americas in their struggle against imperialism was very important, 'a question of life or death', it was because 'The revolution of proletariat and poor peasants in any country of South America, will lead to the immediate armed intervention of the United States, which in turn will make necessary the revolutionary intervention of the proletariat of the USA'.[5]

Given those conditions, it could be said that from the first moment, the Comintern took a somewhat pessimistic view of the moment when the Latin American revolution would arise and triumph. If world revolution was an active process, if (in the dominant point of view of the leadership of the Comintern) it would spread from Europe or the advanced countries to the extra-European world, or if it would break out in Asia (as Roy thought), in Latin America such a revolution was not possible before the triumph of the Socialist revolution in the United States or, at least, possible only as a simultaneous process. In any case, it was out of the question that a Socialist or even Socialist-oriented revolution could be successful in Latin America. The influence that such

a way of thinking would have over the Latin American Leninists, over the Communist parties to be founded in the immediate future is easily discernible: the lack of a real 'will to power', the ironical stigma with which their enemies on the 'reformist' left had marked them in the thirties and forties.[6] The extreme version of such an idea was allegedly expressed by de la Plaza (a leader of the Mexican revolutionary movement) who supposedly said that the triumph of the revolution in Latin America would wait until the United States had achieved theirs.[7]

Without any direct or apparent reference to them, this debate involved several theoretical problems that in one way or another were a matter of permanent discussion in the Comintern and which were, about forty years later, at the centre of the Sino-Soviet split. Besides the debate related to the starting point in the industrial countries and the relation between Socialist and colonial revolutions, there was another question involved, about who could be called the 'teachers' and who the 'pupils' in the school of revolution.

The problem was raised by Lenin in his early (1902) pamphlet, *What is to be done?* If Socialism is a science, as Marxism considers it to be, it cannot be developed spontaneously by the working class, but has to be taught 'from the outside' by radical intellectuals, by social scientists and by that collective intelligence which was the political party of the working class.[8] The inner logic of such reasoning led to another conclusion: Socialism has to be taught, *a fortiori*, to peoples who had neither a theoretical tradition of Socialism nor even an industrial working class. Thus, when in 1923 the Comintern published a manifesto, 'To workers and peasants of South America', the first sentence of which called on them 'to prepare themselves for the class struggle and to support the revolutionary movement of the world proletariat', it made clear the way to achieve such a 'preparation'. The South Americans were reminded that 'in the United States there are Communists ready to help you in the revolutionary struggle'.[9]

In fact, at that very moment there were already some Latin American Communist Parties which had been founded, which had joined the Comintern or were to be accepted in the immediate future. Even though they were not very big, they were by no means less powerful than the Communist Party of the United States, which had little connection with American society and its working class, and moreover, was shattered by factional struggles.

Thus, it could be said that in its first attempt to define Latin American revolution as a theoretical issue, the Comintern set up three main points: (1) the specificity of the American case in the context of

world revolution, for although 'where' to strike first at capitalism (in the metropolitan or colonial countries) might be a subject of disagreement elsewhere, in America it was clear to the Comintern that it had to be a single and practically simultaneous process; (2) It was also clear to the Comintern that, if there had to be a leader in the American revolution, somebody able to 'teach' revolution to the remaining peoples and Communist parties of the continent, it had to be the workers of the United States and their Communist Party; (3) The United States was becoming, or was already the strongest and the most rapacious of all imperialisms, as well as being predestined to become 'the last bulwark' of world reaction. Thus, in what could be called the timing of Socialist world revolution, the American revolution was logically doomed to be the last one.

The most interesting problem was perhaps the first one, but the Comintern did not elaborate on it. Moreover, when the APRA of Haya de la Torre began to speak of the so-called 'American space-time',[10] Leninists merely despised it without making a real attempt to present an alternative proposition or to reflect on the specificity of the American revolution. The second problem which arose weighed heavily on the evolution of the Latin American parties, particularly in the Caribbean area, where the Communist Party of the United States and its leader Earl Browder, would achieve an influence that did not match the actual importance of that party either in the context of United States politics or among American Marxists.

Revolution, or mere 'support'?

The third problem listed, was the centre of an important discussion in the Comintern, which lasted longer than the International itself; practically until the Cuban Revolution in the early sixties. It was a recasting of the issue of 'when' the Latin American revolution would arrive, stating the problem in different terms. What was the significance of the Latin American revolution in the context of world revolution? It could be said that depending upon the moment there were two ways of answering the question. From the beginnings of the Third International itself to 1929, the question could be thought of as somewhat academic. In 1929, after the meeting of the Latin American Communist parties in Buenos Aires, when the Comintern was confronted with a continent where 'revolutions' blew up everywhere, the feeling of Leninists that they were living a revolutionary process which had already begun, was vaguely linked to the spectacle of rebellions arising here and there.

Concerning the American Communists themselves, the problem

seemed to be seen differently from the north and from the south, the former being more optimistic than those from the south. The reason was, quite obviously, proximity to the Mexican Revolution. Thus, at the Sixth Session of the Enlarged Executive of the Comintern at the beginning of 1926, an American delegate of the United States Communist Party, Pepper (otherwise the Hungarian József Pógany),[11] made this enthusiastic prophecy: 'The time is no longer distant when Latin America will become the China of the Far West and Mexico the Canton of Latin America'.[12] At the following meeting of the same body in December of that year, the Argentinian Victorio Codovilla expressed a completely contrary viewpoint:

> I am by no means in agreement with the thesis of Comrade Treint that the Comintern has not devoted sufficient attention to the Latin American countries as a result of the under-estimation [by Bukharin] of North American imperialism. I understand that the chief question involves the struggle that must result in a European Revolution, and that America in the present period can play no such decisive role. It is clear that Comrade Treint, in trying to prove that North America has turned away from Europe in order to settle itself firmly in other countries of the world, has over-estimated the role of Latin American countries.[13]

Perhaps Pepper, or some other leaders of the Comintern, overestimated the revolutionary potentialities of Latin America at that moment. Perhaps Codovilla was only forbidding himself to cradle exaggerated illusions. But what is noteworthy is his own estimation of the 'chief question': European revolution. In the discussion between those who thought that revolution must start in Europe and spread afterwards to the colonial world and those who thought that revolution could start in the colonies, Vittorio Codovilla seemed to react as a European rather than as a man belonging to the group of countries situated on the periphery or 'colonial world' (according to the terminology already used by the Comintern and which usually included Latin America).

More surprising than *what* he said was the fact that Codovilla expressed this opinion in the middle of the so-called 'stabilization' period, as the revolutionary wave had ebbed in Europe since 1923. To make world revolution depend upon the thrust Europe could give it, meant that the revolution would be postponed for a long time. Moreover, the statement of Codovilla contradicted the tendency in the Comintern to pay more attention (and actually to switch) to the colonial world as the starting point of revolution, at least while the 'second' or 'stabilization' period lasted.[14]

Such an opinion also contradicted the feelings of most of the Latin

American Communists who perceived social unrest in a large area of Latin America and saw that, in the north of that continent, it sometimes took the shape of armed upheavals. Thus, in 1928, at the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern, both the Uruguayan, Sala, and the Mexican, Carrillo, viewed Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Bolivia as being on the eve of some kind of agrarian or democratic-bourgeois revolution and, of course, saw that in Mexico (as Carrillo said) 'Revolutions and counter-revolutions follow each other at a speed unknown elsewhere'.[15] Moreover, the idea that a revolution could not succeed if it took place in a single country of Latin America was opposed by a Mexican leader in the following terms:

> [We ought to know] whether the Mexican proletariat can seize and keep Power without being directly supported by the working class of the United States. The Mexican reformists defend the thesis that any revolutionary politics is impossible in Mexico before the American proletariat has toppled its own bourgeoisie. Our party has always opposed such a thesis . . . because it is hardly imaginable that in the case of a real workers' government in Mexico, the Mexican proletariat will be isolated.[16]

Moreover, the Colombian Cardenas, in a polemic with the Russian Travin (otherwise Gusev),[17] stated that the Nicaraguan example showed that the revolutionary movement could triumph in a single country.[18]

Nonetheless, the leadership of the Comintern continued to see revolution in Latin America merely as a supporting factor of world (i.e., European) revolution. Such was the opinion of Humbert-Droz in his speech on Latin America before the delegates to the Sixth World Congress,[19] and the Executive Committee took the same view in the thesis proposed to the Latin American Communists to be discussed at their first meeting of June 1929 in Buenos Aires: as in all colonial countries, the revolutionary movement in Latin America was 'a support, an important aid of revolution.'[20] But when the delegates of the Latin American Communists met eventually for the first time, they seemed to be less concerned with the place that the Comintern had reserved for them in the context of the world revolution than with revolution itself, or at least what they considered as the coming revolution.

A delegate sent by the Communist Party of Mexico, Suárez (otherwise the painter David Alfaro Siqueiros),[21] seemed to be well placed to state the problem in the clearest terms. He came from a country already shaken by a revolution and he was himself a 'colonel' of the civil war. Communists, said Siqueiros, ought to take up arms at once, without waiting any more, to achieve the proletarian revolution in Mexico.[22]

The speech of Siqueiros might have caused an orthodox Marxist and Leninist to despise it as being contaminated with 'putschist' and 'anarchist' tendencies (Siqueiros also proposed the tyrannicide of the Cuban dictator Machado), but he was not speaking without reason. He presented an example his comrades could easily understand at that moment: 'Suppose that our movement does not succeed thoroughly; at the first moment we see its failure; we have, comrades, the prospect of creating a Sandino in every region'.[23] But what was at the very centre of Siqueiros' reasoning (for it revealed a concern widely shared among the delegates at the meeting of Buenos Aires), was that 'the objective and subjective conditions of Latin America are frankly revolutionary; if we do not take the leadership of the uprising, that insurrection will be carried out by the bourgeois parties . . .'.[24]

That Siqueiros was not speaking strictly for himself, nor was his reasoning a single extrapolation of Mexican events, seemed to be demonstrated by the fact that several more delegates expressed the same concern. A Colombian delegate, Mahecha (a 'pure' Indian as he called himself) said that unless the Communists took the initiative, the Colombian Liberals would achieve revolution with imperialist support, with the help of the American oil companies which were even disposed to offer money to the Colombian Communists in order to start the revolution.[25] His comrade Matayana went farther when he suggested that such an offer ought to be discussed in the meeting, which was indignantly rejected by the delegates.[26] Villalba, from Guatemala, told them that in his country the situation was the same: Liberals were determined to start the revolution with imperialist backing.[27]

The leadership of the Comintern seemed to be waiting for such an argument for in its 'thesis' they warned the Latin American Communists against 'still having the idea that the revolutionary struggle under proletarian leadership will stay in the old canvases of purely military action, in the same frames of the revolutionary struggle of the liberal petty-bourgeoisie'.[28] And at the meeting itself, Codovilla told his young comrades that

> Concerning the idea that the masses are 'conscienceless' and that they want Revolution, be it led by us or by Liberals, in order to understand how that is true, it is neccessary to state previously *what Revolution means*. If we understand Revolution as Mahecha does – i.e., *land for its workers, weapons for the working masses and workers and peasants' government* – this revolution cannot be achieved by Liberals, and we do not have to be afraid of 'competition'.[29]

However, the picture that their comrades drew impressed the Communist leaders, who stated in the conclusions of that meeting that a closer

analysis of the Latin American situation led them 'to the conclusion that the situation in many countries of Latin America was far more revolutionary than we supposed before' and that in Colombia, at least, there was an immediate revolutionary situation which could lead the syndicates, the peasants and the Party to take power and set up a workers and peasants' government.[30]

In any case, the South American leaders of the Comintern managed to keep their estimation of the place of Latin America in world revolution within the parameters indicated in the 'Thesis' on the colonial question voted in 1928 at the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern. This stated somewhat contradictorily that 'The toiling masses of the colonies struggling against imperialist slavery, represent a most powerful auxiliary force of the Socialist World Revolution', being at the same time 'the most dangerous sector for the world imperialist front'.[31]

In 1935, at the Seventh Congress, the speaker on colonial questions, the Chinese Wang Ming, could hail 'the tremendous sweep in the liberation movement in the countries of Latin America – primarily, the revolutionary struggle in Cuba – the mutiny of the Chilean Navy, and the growing national-revolutionary movement in Brazil'.[32] However, an important change seemed to be evolving. Whilst in the Sixth World Congress that 'auxiliary force' was supporting 'the Soviet Union and the revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries', for Wang Ming in the Seventh Congress 'the growth of the forces of revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries is the result not only of the increased general offensive of imperialism and the sharpening of the class struggle in these countries, but also of the *direct and enormous influence of the Great October Revolution and of its further historic victories during the First and Second Five-Year plan in particular*'.[33]

The question of 'what'

According to its previously described Machiavellian character, the Communist International began to speak out on the moment *when* Latin American revolution should break out, before discussing *what* such a revolution should mean. Actually, the Comintern did the same concerning world revolution. The organization, founded with the confessed intention of 'exporting' Russian revolution, only long after having been founded and, moreover, after having acted tirelessly to bring about revolution, decided to make public what kind of social change it was offering to the peoples of the world.

Thus, the programme of the Comintern was approved at the Sixth

World Congress, that is, eleven years after the October Revolution and when the Soviet regime had experienced War Communism (1917–21), the so-called New Economic Policy (1921–8), and was on the verge of entering a new period of a radical and agonizing transformation of its social and economic structure: the period of the Five Year Plans aimed at speeding up industrialization and forcing collectivization of peasant production. This programme gave a very detailed picture of the different steps a proletarian government must take in order to achieve socialist revolutionary change in a society. At the same time, the 'Theses' on colonial questions pointed out what ought to be considered 'the preparation of the prerequisites for proletarian dictatorship and socialist revolution, that is . . . the general basic tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution in the colonies and semi-colonies'.[34] A somewhat modified version of this programme was proposed at the same meeting by Humbert-Droz in his speech on 'Questions of the Latin American countries',[35] which appeared in its totality in the final 'Theses' and was widely accepted and promoted by the Latin American Communists.

The uneven development of world revolution was thus accepted and codified. It may be useful to take those three texts as separate ones, as three different propositions (the programme of Socialist revolution, the programme of democratic-bourgeois revolution, the programme of Latin American revolution) in order to compare them.[36]

Industry. The programme of the Socialist revolution proposes the expropriation without indemnification, and proletarian nationalization, of all the big enterprises, transport and radio-telegraph-telephone, and their transferral to the Soviets. It proposes also the workers' management of industry and the adaptation of industrial activity to the needs of the greatest numbers of workers. The programme of the democratic–bourgeois revolution proposes in this realm the nationalization of foreign concessions, railways, banks, etc. The programme of the Latin American revolution proposes here the confiscation of foreign enterprises (mines, industrial undertakings, banks, etc.) and also of the big enterprises of the national bourgeoisie and the landlords.

Agriculture. For a Socialist revolution, the programme proposes the confiscation and proletarian nationalization of all large landholdings in town and country (belonging to individuals, churches, monasteries, etc.), and also of buildings, machinery and other stocks, cattle, and enterprises for the processing of agricultural products. It also proposes that all large estates, particularly model estates, would be transferred to the management of the organs of the proletarian dictatorship, to be organized and run as Soviet farms. The programme proposes also to

prohibit the sale and purchase of land; and also usury. And finally, it proposes the organization of credit schemes for the improvement of agriculture, as well as financial aid and the support of cooperative activities.

For agriculture, the programme of the democratic-bourgeois speaks of 'the carrying through of the agrarian revolution'. It calls for the emancipation of peasants from all pre-capitalist and colonial conditions of exploitation and bondage, the nationalization of the land, and radical measures for alleviating the conditions of the peasantry with the object of establishing the closest possible union between town and village. Concerning Latin America, the programme for its revolution proposes in agricultural matters the expropriation without indemnification of the big plantations and *latifundia*. Furthermore, it calls for the handing over of a part of those lands for the collective cultivation of the agricultural workers, and the distribution of the other portion between the peasants, tenant farmers and colonists.

Trade and credit. Under a Socialist revolution, says the programme, the private banks would be nationalized, and all bank operations would be centralized and subordinated to the state bank. It proposes also the nationalization of the wholesale trade, as well as the monopoly of the foreign trade. It asks for the repudiation of state debts to foreign as well as to home capitalists. The revolutionary power will support cooperative consumer activities. The programme the democratic-bourgeois revolution proposes here the nationalization of the foreign concessions for banks. For the Latin American revolution, the programme speaks of the repudiation of state debts, and the liquidation of any kind of control over the country by imperialism.

Social welfare. In the programme of the Socialist revolution, a seven-hour working day, shortened to a six-hour working day for heavy work and for youths under 18 years old is proposed. Night work is to be prohibited for women. The programme calls for the development of social insurance (old age, etc); and also, social hygiene, including measures for the struggle against social diseases such as alcoholism. Finally, the programme proclaims the juridical and moral equality of the sexes. The programme for the democratic-bourgeois revolution proposes in this realm an eight-hour working-day, equality of rights for women and the abolition of caste distinctions. Concerning Latin America, the programme proposes also an eight-hour working day and the 'stamping out of semi-slave-like conditions of labor'.

Housing. The programme the Socialist revolution proposes is the confiscation of properties of large landlords, the transfer of confiscated

houses to the local Soviet; the bourgeois districts to be settled by workers; the palaces and large private and public buildings to be handed over to workers' organizations; and a large-scale housing programme to be carried out. There is no particular elaboration for the democratic-bourgeois and Latin American revolutions.

National and colonial questions. Recognition of the right of all nations, regardless of race, to complete self-determination, is the proposition of the programme of the Socialist revolution. It is completed with the promise to help further the economic and cultural development of the former colonies and the struggle of Socialist power against racism and chauvinism. The programme of the democratic-bourgeois revolution demands the establishment of national unity in countries where this unity has not yet been attained. It also calls for equal rights for all nationalities and the abolition of caste distinctions. There is no particular elaboration for Latin America in this realm.

Cultural revolution. This item, called 'means for exerting ideological influence', contains, in the programme for the Socialist revolution; the proposition to nationalize the printing plants, newspapers, cinema and theatre, and to use them for the political and general instruction of the workers. The programme for the democratic-bourgeois revolution proposes the separation of church and state, and the raising of the cultural level of the working masses, as well as their political education. Once again, there is not a particular elaboration for Latin America.

The wrong name of revolution

Before extending further the analysis of the differences between the three programmes, two observations should be made. The first refers to those two aspects where there is no particular comment relating to Latin America. Concerning the ideological questions (the 'cultural revolution'), the lack of elaboration may be due to simple forgetfulness or even the limitations of space. But the same silence on 'national questions' may well be due to more serious problems. In fact, even if the Comintern paid great attention to the 'Negro question' in the United States, the question of 'races' in Latin America, which had arisen by this time, remained unresolved from the theoretical viewpoint. It was the only problem discussed at the Buenos Aires' meeting of 1929 which was not concluded with the vote of a single resolution, but instead, two different conclusions had to be published.[37]

The second observation refers to the question of housing. With regard to it, in the programme of the Socialist revolution, a fair amount

of detail is given, but absolutely nothing concerning either the colonial world or Latin America. The reason for this was fairly obvious. Socialist revolution had to be *urban*, whilst colonial and Latin American revolution had to be *rural*. That is, it had to be a social movement which took place in an area where the problem of housing was perhaps not perceived with the same acuteness as in the cities.

The difference between town and country is at the very centre of all the theoretical elaborations of the Leninists concerning the colonial world. At that same Congress of 1928, when presenting the Draft Programme of the Comintern, Bukharin insisted on what he himself called 'a general principle': the industrial countries formed the 'world city', whilst the colonial world formed the 'world countryside'.[38] This is not merely a question of simple differences. Throughout the three programmes summarized above, the ambivalent attitude, the ambivalent feeling of Leninists, perhaps of all Marxists, towards the peasantry is present. For them, the peasant is, at the same time, the potential enemy and the preferred ally of the proletariat.

The peasant as an enemy: Lenin considered the ousting of landowners and capitalists as a relatively easy task ('that is something we accomplished with comparative ease') when compared with those millions and millions of 'small commodity producers' who could not 'be ousted' but with whom the Soviets 'must learn to live'. And he went further in his pessimistic picture of their evils:

> They surround the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat, and constantly causes among the proletariat relapses into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism, and alternating moods of exaltation and dejection . . . It is a thousand times easier to vanquish the centralised big bourgeoisie than to 'vanquish' the millions upon millions of petty proprietors; however, through their ordinary, everyday, imperceptible, elusive and demoralising activities, they produce the *very* results which the bourgeoisie need and which tend to restore the bourgeoisie.[39]

The peasant as an ally: that ever-growing, never-resting foe was not only the same who helped the Russian proletariat to crush the landowners and the capitalists, but was someone the proletarians 'must learn to live with'. Towards the end of his life, Lenin began to see the alliance with the peasantry not as a mere circumstance in the seizure of power by the Russian proletariat, but as the very base of the Soviet society. Their alliance was the historic *smychka* whose conservation was, for Lenin and later for Bukharin, *devoutly to be wished*.[40]

Thus, when noting the comparison among programmes presented by

the Comintern as the prognosis of Socialist, democratic-bourgeois and Latin American revolutions it is necessary to take into consideration, perhaps as the most important issue, that of peasantry–proletariat rapport. An example is in the comparison between the measures to be taken by a revolutionary Socialist or by a revolutionary democratic-bourgeois regime in the industrial field. In the second case, few details are given. It is logical: the democratic-bourgeois revolutionary programme is to be applied in the colonial (or semi-colonial) world, where industries are either non-existent or in the hands of foreign capitalists.

However, in the programme of the Latin American revolution it is stated that the big enterprises to be confiscated are not only those of the foreign bourgeoisie but also those of the 'national bourgeoisie and the landlords'. This was due to a particular idea of the class structure of Latin America which the Comintern had. It was expressed by Humbert-Droz by saying that in this continent, the bourgeois and the big landlord was often the same person.[41]

But a major question was not even touched upon: to whom were those confiscated enterprises to be handed over? In the programme for a socialist revolution, the organization for the worker's control of industry was, at least theoretically, the main point which made the difference between that and any other kind of revolution. But in the programme of the democratic-bourgeois and the Latin American revolutions, this question is not raised. It might be said that there was no reason for it to be, because these are 'bourgeois' revolutions. But, just at this moment, the Comintern, burned by the experience with the Chinese Kuo-Ming-Tang, was in the mood to show serious doubts about the capacity of the national bourgeosie to lead the democratic-bourgeois revolution, to say nothing of doing so victoriously.

In these circumstances, it is possible that the theoreticians of the Comintern were entering an ideological blind alley. In a bourgeois revolution, the enterprises to be confiscated were not to be controlled by the national bourgeoisie; the alternative was to put those enterprises into the hands of workers. But the workers of those (colonial and semi-colonial) countries formed a class either too weak or too close by their origins to the peasantry. That was the idea expressed at the Sixth World Congress by Otto Kuusinen, when he said that 'this proletariat is almost everywhere the first generation [of this class]. It has mostly come from the rural district and a considerable section of it goes back to those districts'.[42] On the other hand, there was not, of course, the alternative of putting those enterprises directly into the hands of peasants. Thus, the Comintern seemed to prefer remaining silent on the issue.

The listing of measures to be taken in the agricultural realm would normally be the most interesting in order to make the comparison among the three programmes already mentioned. In the programme of the Socialist revolution, among these measures there is one which is not quoted in the summary given above for two reasons: the first because it is expressed in such a conditional form that it is not easy to appreciate its real importance; the second because it deserves a particular commentary, being clearly an example of that distrustfulness towards the peasantry present in the heart of Leninists as well as in Lenin himself. It states that after seizing power, the proletariat will proceed to effect:

> The transfer of part of the confiscated land of the large landowners and other landowners to the peasants (to the poor peasants and partly also to the middle [class] peasants), particularly where these lands were formerly cultivated by tenant farmers and served to hold them in economic bondage. The size of the portion to be handed over to the peasants is to be determined by economic expediency and by the need to neutralize the peasants and win them over to the proletarian cause. It will therefore vary according to different local conditions.[43]

This text, so full of ambiguities, portrays perhaps better than anything else the cautious attitude of Leninists towards the peasantry. Without defining who are those 'big' landowners to be expropriated, it threatens to do the same with 'other landowners', which phrase could be the subject of all kinds of interpretations. This land was to be transferred to 'poor' peasants and 'also to the middle [class] peasants' who (as with everything in the 'middle') are not easy to define. Furthermore, the amount of this land to fall into their hands was 'to be determined by economic expediency'. And all those measures so warily proposed were aimed at the need 'to neutralize' the peasants (a friend does not need to be neutralized) and 'win them over to the proletarian cause' (an ally does not need to be won over).

With reference to what Bukharin had called the 'world countryside', when the Comintern attempted to define the bourgeois-democratic revolution, to be brought about in the colonies and the so-called semi-colonies, the ambiguities continue. What does 'the carrying through of the agrarian revolution' exactly mean? It seems that, unable to give a clearer idea of what was to be done, the Comintern chose the shelter of generalities. And then comes the 'nationalization of the land'. There were, at that moment, some countries (it was the case of Venezuela) where the biggest proportion of the land was not held in private ownership, but had always belonged to the government or the municipality. Nevertheless, the power of the big landowners (or

latifundistas) was enormous, as was the misery of the vast majority of peasants.

It might be said, for that matter, that the programme of the Latin American revolution seems to be slightly more precise. Even though it is not specific about the size of those 'big plantations' to be confiscated; even though the word *latifundio* itself was scarcely less ambiguous (there was, it seems, a lack of definition in the air), the proposal to 'hand over a part of the confiscated land to the collective cultivation of the agricultural workers' was perhaps a sign of the hope, expressed elsewhere, that the communist traditions of the indigenous Americans could be a way to accelerate the transformation of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a Socialist one.[44]

The ambiguity concerning the peasantry is not, however, the only question worth noting in those three programmes. Perhaps at least as striking (because the programmes speak of a democratic revolution) is the absence of references to democratic slogans and, in general, to political questions. In the Socialist programme there is a general theoretical definition of what Soviet power and the proletarian dictatorship were, mainly as opposed to the bourgeois dictatorship. But, with some few exceptions (the right to elect and recall representatives, the fusion of the executive and legislature and the substitution of elections at the place of work instead of territorial elections), not many details were given as to how Soviet power and the proletarian dictatorship were actually to be controlled by the masses as a way of assuring the real proletarian and democratic character of that dictatorship. Neither in the bourgeois-democratic nor in the Latin American programmes was any reference made at all.

Given these circumstances, that is, with a bourgeois revolution that the bourgeoisie seemed (in the Comintern's view) unable to achieve; and with a democratic revolution that did not propose democratic tasks to carry through, the first conclusion to be drawn is that calling such a movement 'democratic-bourgeois' was anything but adequate. If a name had to be adopted for this kind of revolution, the closest to its real nature would be that of a *national-peasant* revolution. But the Communists always preferred to avoid references which could be confused with nationalistic slogans, and given their ambiguous attitude towards the peasantry, it is not surprising that such a term was not utilized. As a matter of fact, that kind of revolutionary movement began to be called 'agrarian-anti-imperialist' but mainly towards the end (and after the dissolution) of the Comintern.

If the Communist International preferred to label those movements as

'democratic-bourgeois', that is, give them the name of a regime (bourgeois democracy) so openly despised by Marxists and by Leninists, it was evidently done in order to underline its transitional character, its condition of 'prerequisite' for the Socialist revolution and the proletarian dictatorship.

How 'revolution' was understood

In the preceding pages, a comparison was made among the three ways to achieve world revolution proposed by the theoreticians of the Comintern. But there is another interesting question which arises: how these theoretical propositions were perceived by the Communists who belonged to the 'colonial' world as well as to Latin America. It should be said that the already noted ambiguities seemed to be coupled with an understandable confusion – understandable when speaking of people whose lack of Marxist culture was remarked upon so often by their Communist tutors. China was the country where the democratic-bourgeois revolution had advanced the fastest and farthest. Nevertheless, the Chinese reporter at the Sixth Congress, Strakhov (otherwise Chü Chiu-pai)[45] told his audience that

> some of our comrades ask for immediate carrying through of Socialism, that is, the egalitarian distribution of land, as Socialism is understood in the countryside. Others say: we must propose only the agrarian revolution.
> . . . Concerning agrarian revolution, we must say that, without the overthrowing of the national bourgeoisie, so closely linked to the gentry by agrarian relations of a feudal and semi-feudal order, there cannot be agrarian revolution, there cannot be agrarian reform.[46]

Notable in these words is not only the confusion shown by the Chinese militants, but also the fact that Strakhov, an important leader of that Party and furthermore, its representative at the Comintern, seemed to take as synonymous the words 'revolution' and 'reform', whereas the Leninist viewed them as terms not to be confused in any case, if not in fact utterly opposed.

Speaking at the Sixth Congress in 1928, Humbert-Droz tried to be less ambiguous. In the Latin American revolution there was what could be called a confluence of class struggles: peasants against landlords, this being 'the fundamental character of the revolutionary movement in Latin America', as well as the struggle of the workers, peasants and petty-bourgeois against imperialism, especially against Yankee imperialism. Then, there was the struggle of the working masses

against dictatorial regimes, emergency laws and terrorism, a struggle which 'is carried on in many of the South American countries for civil liberties and a liberal régime'. Finally, where the working class was strong enough, there was its struggle for better working conditions, for abolition of conditions reminiscent of slavery in the plantations, mines, etc. These currents combined to give the Latin American revolution the character of:

> a revolutionary movement of the democratic-bourgeois type in a semi-colonial country where the struggle against imperialism occupies an important place and where the predominant struggle is not that of a national bourgeoisie for independence on a capitalist basis but the struggle of the peasants for the agrarian revolution against the régime of the big landed proprietors.[47]

The character of Latin American revolution proposed by Humbert-Droz merits some remarks. The fight between 'landed proprietors' and poor peasants at the centre of the struggle in Latin America might have been, at this stage of the Comintern's knowledge of the continent, strongly influenced by the Chinese example,[48] but also by that of the Mexican Revolution. It did not pass, however, without opposition. As mentioned in the preceding chapter the Ecuadorian, Ricardo Paredes, stated, when discussing the Draft Programme, that including the Latin American countries within the 'world countryside' distorted the appraisal of the class struggle in the area, underestimating the proletariat and overestimating the peasant forces. The slogan of the agrarian revolution was then not correct. But taking into consideration this strong accent put on the class struggle in the countryside, it is worth noting that the CI never succeeded in building strong peasant movements in Latin America. Moreover, in 1929, in their 'agrarian theses' prior to the Buenos Aires meeting, the Argentinian Communists acknowledged that although fully aware of the importance of the agrarian question, they had never paid much attention to its study.[49]

Secondly, Humbert-Droz pointed out the other face, so to speak, of the Latin American revolution: the struggle against imperialism, 'especially against Yankee imperialism'. But this last indication had to confront, at the very moment when Humbert-Droz was speaking (1928), a problem linked both with the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and with the 'general outline' of the Comintern. That question was the worsening of relations between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union by 1927.[50] Just when Great Britain was on the point of being replaced by the United States as the main enemy of revolution, it

became again a menace, and a target of Comintern propaganda as well. That was to have some influence on the Comintern's analysis of the 'main enemy' of the Latin American revolution.

This speech of Humbert-Droz is also worth comparing on an important point with the programme of the Latin American revolution previously summarized. There, nothing was said about the democratic liberties (freedom of press, of association and of meeting). Contrary to this, Humbert-Droz saw the struggle 'for civil liberties and a liberal régime' as an aspect of the active revolutions in Latin America. Although the 'working masses' could be either an ambiguous expression or broad enough to cover a wide spectrum of classes, the fact is that at that moment and later, the struggle was mainly one of the urban middle-class, and above all, of students.[51] Where such a slogan also became a banner of the working class was in those countries where the strength of the workers' movement enabled them to have their own organizations (unions, etc.) and where, of course, the question relating to the legal status of such organizations and the struggle for defending them springs up. That was the case of Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.

The speech of Humbert-Droz suggested also that the accent had to be put on the peasant struggle. Nevertheless, the slogan he proposed emphasized the national problem: 'Federal Union of the Workers' and Peasants' Republics of Latin America' for the struggle against imperialism.[52] Peasant struggle against landlords; national struggle against imperialism. It is normal that the discussion on the programme of a national-peasant (or an 'agrarian-anti-imperialist') revolution would revolve around these two poles. However, underneath was perhaps another non-theoretical question. The fact is that the entire concept of the Latin American revolution as proposed by Humbert-Droz did not pass without opposition. Perhaps it is not quite adequate to call what followed a 'doctrinal' controversy. What it revealed more than anything else was some confusion about the use of certain expressions of Marxist jargon, perhaps too new for the Latin American Communists. And, as was becoming more and more a habit in the Communist movement, some of the attacks were less directed towards an ideological misconception than to attacking the speaker himself. As E. H. Carr suggests, Humbert-Droz was beginning to become the target of such attacks *ad hominem*.[53] That seems to be the case in the attacks apparently against what was called 'Latin Americanism', supposedly defended by Humbert-Droz and which would be, roughly, the proposition of conceiving the Latin American revolution more as national ('anti-imperialist') than social ('agrarian'). During the discussion in the Sixth

World Congress, he was attacked on this point mainly by the 'Mexican' Communist Banderas (otherwise the Pole Stanislaw Pestkowski)[54] and by another 'Mexican', Carlos Contreras (otherwise the Italian Vittorio Vidali),[55] who thought such a slogan was 'not only useless but dangerous'.

But, on the other hand, even if those attacks were more personal than doctrinal, they responded nevertheless to a real uneasiness among Latin Americans. The slogan proposed by Humbert-Droz could be confused with those of the APRA. This concern, expressed by the Argentinian Ravetto at the Sixth World Congress,[56] would later be the core of a harsh argument between the Peruvian Marxist, José Carlos Mariátegui, and the APRA.[57]

After these problems ('when' and 'what'), the Comintern had to resolve two more theoretical *and* practical issues, both of which constitute the most important challenge any political party has to face: the approach to power. They are the questions of 'who' (the enemy to vanquish, the leading force of revolution, the allies) and the question of 'how' to take power: 'from outside' (insurrection) or 'from within' (national union tactic).

6

Power as theory

It should not be forgotten that those who are debating all the preceding problems are Marxists. Therefore, the most important questions they had to ventilate at the 1928 World Congress, at the 1929 meeting of Buenos Aires and in the following years, had to be related, and *were* related to the conditions and character of the class struggle. It should also not be forgotten that those who are discussing these problems are Leninists who are Machiavellians too. Thus, at any moment in their political activity, at any moment of their life, they have to deal with the problem of power, both theoretically and practically. Their first approach to this question came theoretically, in the debates over two main issues: the first, related to the 'main enemy'; the second, to the leading force in the forthcoming revolution.

Enemies

For Marxists, the main enemy is of course capitalism. For Leninists, the main enemy has to be imperialism. However, as Leninists and particularly for those who were Latin Americans, it was understood that imperialism was not a unified world phenomenon, but rather demonstrated distinct national origins.

In America, it might be tempting to identify it as American imperialism. But the problem was somewhat more complicated, at that moment. British imperialism was still strong in Latin America, but the question has to be examined not from the economic point of view, but from a political one, that is, taking into consideration a given circumstance. And, as has already been mentioned, the political situation after 1927 led both the Soviet Union and the Comintern to turn their weapons against Great Britain once again. This was not only a question of changing the target of a propaganda campaign, but an attitude that led the Comintern to commit one of its biggest miscalcu-

lations: to believe (or to pretend to believe) that the British–American rivalry had not only replaced the hostility between Germany and Great Britain,[1] but that this new enmity would inevitably lead both powers to war.

Of course, it has to be taken into consideration that the Comintern was used to a kind of self intoxication which led it to confound wishes with reality. The Soviet Union and the Comintern were interested in a conflict which would weaken the two strongest capitalist countries and therefore would logically strengthen Communism. But to reduce the whole discussion to a mirage is an oversimplification. Because the leaders of the Comintern were almost prophetic in their forecasting of the coming war. At the meeting of Buenos Aires in 1929, at the same time that the Uruguayan, Sala, predicted that the next war would be against the Soviet Union, against the Chinese revolution or among the imperialist countries,[2] Codovilla said that the war would be inter-imperialist and against the Soviet Union[3] and Humbert-Droz said that this war could begin anywhere and thus, the smallest conflict could fire the powder of a worldwide struggle.[4]

There was, moreover, another element confusing this problem of the 'main enemy': the Latin Americans of different countries normally had the tendency to see the question according to their own geographical situation. Thus, while at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, the Brazilian delegate spoke of the oppression of the Latin American peoples by both American and British imperialisms,[5] the Mexican, Carrillo, spoke of the continent as the 'hinterland of American imperialism'.[6] In any case, it must be said that having to divide their shots between two imperialisms, between a pair of enemies, certainly did not facilitate the task for the Latin American Communists.

In relation to the other foe, the 'big landowners', there was also a lack of clarity. What would be the essential element to categorize them? The expression 'big landowners' seemed to point at the size of their property, of their lands. But the 'agrarian theses' of the Argentinian Party, published prior to the meeting of Buenos Aires, pointed out a situation that was not peculiar to that country: the biggest landowner was the state.[7] This question of the state as landowner was the main reason advanced against expropriation of *latifundia* by whoever opposed any radical agrarian reform in Latin America.[8]

Of course, the regime of *latifundia* is not defined only by the fact of owning a large, even a huge expanse of land. It is related to a particular kind of class structure in the countryside. But when this was being discussed, the Latin American Marxists did not have a clear idea of these

concepts, and the ambiguous expression coined in the Comintern programme did not facilitate their understanding: 'big landowners'. As a matter of fact, the slogan 'land for those who work it' was diversely interpreted by Uruguayans, Bolivians and Brazilians.[9] The lack of real elaboration in this realm is surprising. But here, once again, the question arises of the attitude of Communists towards agrarian questions, at least during a period of the Comintern's history which lasted until 1935.

Leaders and allies of revolution

The second issue which arose was that of the leading forces in the forthcoming revolution. It had to be examined with regard to the leading force, that is, the Communist Party, and the leading class, that is the proletariat. And related to this, the role of their allies in the revolutionary process had to be considered. Be it Socialist or democratic-bourgeois, or better, be it democratic-bourgeois and Socialist, for the Communist International a revolution was unavoidable, and was something which would come in the immediate future. Moreover, it had already occurred, with the October Revolution in Russia. Such a revolution could erupt spontaneously, but victory was impossible without a leading force. Obviously, the Comintern was anything but trustful with regard to the capacity of any class except the proletariat to successfully terminate a revolutionary process,. Yet in the 'world countryside' the proletariat was too recent, weak and without class consciousness. Who, then, would lead the coming, the unstoppable fatum of the revolution?

For Communists, the answer comes without hesitation: the Party. This was almost a commonplace of Leninism, after Lenin's *What is to be done?* was published in 1902. But such an answer contains also a danger, what Isaac Deutscher called 'subtitutism', and which pervaded the Bolshevik Party after 1921. That is, when the proletariat is missing and therefore does not fulfil its role, the party can take its place and fulfil its commitments, its duties as a class.[10] It is not within the scope of this work to discuss the validity of Deutscher's premise, but it is fairly obvious that the weakness of the proletariat, the distrust of the peasantry and of intellectuals, were sufficient conditions to lead the Latin American Communists to adopt a similar attitude.

In the previously quoted manifesto of 1921 to the workers of America, the Comintern felt the need to send the revolutionary proletarians of South America an urgent message – they ought to organize a Communist Party in every country:

It is not necessary that such a party be strong from its inception; it needs merely a clear and precise programme; to create a bold agitation to favour revolutionary principles as well as tactics; to be implacable when struggling against those who lead the masses to mistakes and betray them.[11]

In fact, this first message commanded the Latin American Communists to act as though they were fully fledged, experienced parties when in fact they barely existed in embryo. The Comintern proposed that they achieve tasks that could not be accomplished even by parties which had either the authority of government or the force of the army with which to implement their directives.

With this manifesto the Comintern was demanding that its would-be comrades of Latin America write 'a clear and precise programme'. That is, something the Comintern itself would not have until seven years later (and, as has been seen, a programme which was vitiated by ambiguous and obscure concepts). Secondly, it commanded them 'to create' a situation that the strongest Communist Party was unable to achieve just by the mere fact of its existence. As Frank Borkenau points out correctly enough, the defeat of the Comintern in Germany at this same date (1921), was a clear indication of the dangers of such an adventurous policy.[12] It was also a clear indication of what American Communists could expect if they dared to act in the same way.

Thus, there were only two messages that the Communists of Latin America received that they could possible respond to: to ignore their own weakness and to combat 'traitors'. In other words, sectarianism. Perhaps there is no other course when starting a movement, when creating a party or a school of thought, and transplanting them to a new environment, such as the American continent. Moreover, the Comintern itself had had to fight against a strong tendency in its early years and among its first adherents, to deny the necessity of such a party and, what was considered even more dangerous, to oppose party and revolution.[13] In Latin America, the foundation of Communist Parties would encounter two kinds of opposition: those who thought that on good logic you could not create 'the party of the proletariat' where the proletariat did not exist, and those who saw the problem as a purely tactical issue. In general, the second line of thought was a way of concealing the first one. At the Buenos Aires meeting the Bolivian, Mendizabal, explained why, instead of creating a Communist Party, they had to join a kind of Labour Party in Bolivia, because 'the masses' agreed with Communism, but were afraid of the Party's name.[14] The longest and most interesting debate about that same problem was presented there by the Peruvians. Their reasoning was that having a party with a name other than

Communist was for them the only way to reach the masses.[15] They proposed then to call this party 'Socialist'. Underneath, there was the ongoing argument with the APRA, which had been founded in 1924. As Codovilla realized, the Peruvians were determined to carry out the formation of a party as they proposed, whatever their comrades of the South American Secretariat might think.[16]

The Mexican, Suarez-Siqueiros, went farther at the same meeting. The creation of a Communist Party was taking too long, he allegedly said, the revolution could not wait for Communists. In those circumstances, he proposed some kind of 'red caudillo' as a transition device.[17] This last position was, of course, totally unacceptable to Comintern leaders, particularly Codovilla, and every effort was made to demolish it. To think, he said, as Siqueiros was suggesting, that it was the lack of a 'red caudillo' which was defeating the Chinese Revolution, was simply to underestimate the importance, the significance, of the Party. If the Chinese Revolution was being defeated, it was not due to the lack of a 'red caudillo', but to the lack of a Party which was worth its name.[18] At the end of the meeting, the resolutions stated that in 'all the countries of Latin America there are both objective and subjective conditions for developing strong Communist Parties' and furthermore, that 'the CP must be created and develop itself with its own physiognomy, whatever the political conditions of each country, that it must create a legal mask adopting a different public name, but maintaining both its social composition and its Communist ideology'.[19]

What did 'its own physiognomy' mean? In the resolution, the question of the name of the Party seems to have been put aside as a relatively secondary one. Nevertheless, for Lenin himself it was not. Changing the name of his Bolshevik Party from 'Social-Democrat' to 'Communist' was to throw away the 'dirty clothes', he said. But the Comintern needed to be sure that the question of the name was not a way of concealing a major political divergence. Thus, in the organizational field, after recalling that only a few parties (Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina) were organized on a cellular basis (that is, the particular form of organization the Communist Parties had everywhere), instead of a territorial basis, the Comintern reminded the Communists of the continent that 'The Cell, as basic system of organization, is appropriate not only for the European countries, but for the Latin American parties as well'.[20]

After the Fifth Congress of the Comintern launched the so-called campaign of 'bolshevisation' of the sections of the International (that is, before anything else, to give them the kind of organization the Russian

Party had already), all of the above issues became commonplace in Comintern discussions. But in 1929, for Leninists in Latin America, it was not merely a question of recalling their master's orthodoxy, but the following issues were also linked: the question of the forming of mass parties, and that of the allies of the Communist Party in the Latin American revolution.

When the Sixth Congress of the Comintern opened its discussions, it revealed two new additions that, within the Latin American context, were not unimportant: the Socialist–Communist Party of Ecuador and the Socialist Revolutionary Party of Colombia. At that moment, both of them had a real connection with the political life of their country, and the Colombian party could present itself as a real mass party, at least when comparing it with the tiny handful of militants that in most countries of Latin America called themselves the Communist Party. However, the Ecuadorian and the Colombian parties could not be considered Communist parties, from the orthodox viewpoint of 'bolshevisation'. They were the product (particularly the Colombian) of a decision of the trade unions to found them and thus, obviously, were also a kind of Labour Party;[21] they were organized according to the place where their militants lived (as socialist parties were), not according to the place where they worked, as Communists were.[22] In a letter addressed by the Executive Committee of the Comintern to the Socialist Revolutionary Party of Colombia prior to the meeting at Buenos Aires, they had already recommended switching to the cellular organization.[23] Nevertheless, in August 1928, in the theoretical organ of the Comintern, Humbert-Droz stated that 'Depuration of all elements of confusion and insufficiency must be achieved by means of a patient education coming from the International in order that those parties keep their character of mass movements and must not proceed mechanically to exclusions, splits . . .'[24] The warning of the Swiss leader of the Comintern was doomed to be unheard. The following years, with Stalin becoming more and more important both in the Russian party and the International, were to be years of massive and bloody purges. The Socialist Revolutionary Party of Colombia became later an orthodox, 'bolshevised' party, and an unimportant party as well.[25]

It must be said that this question of the forming of 'real' Communist parties, with their real name and their real organization, which at this moment seemed to be a question of principle for Communists, lost this aspect about a decade later. Under the so-called 'Browderist' influence, the Communist Party of Colombia, for example, went to the opposite

extreme, changing its name to the previously abhorred 'Social-Democratic' in 1944.[26]

The Comintern considered it its duty to put the accent on the primacy of the Party. It was the real leader, the 'High Command' of revolution. But of course, even such a body could not work alone. Thus, a related issue arose, that of the leading class in the democratic-bourgeois revolution. Not only before the meeting at Buenos Aires, but even before the Sixth Congress, the Comintern tended to deny the national bourgeoisie any important role in the leadership of the so-called democratic-bourgeois revolution, thus leaving only three classes interested in carrying out such a movement: the petty-bourgeoisie, the peasants and the proletariat, to name them in ascending importance.[27]

In his report as representative of the ECCI before the Buenos Aires meeting, Humbert-Droz told his generally young comrades that it was a mistake to view the petty-bourgeoisie as a single class, because it was, instead, a contradictory ensemble of several classes with different tendencies depending upon the strength of the main foes facing each other from opposing extremes of the social field: the big bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Nothing in these words was new or unorthodox among Marxists, but what was typical of this particular moment in the life of the Comintern was his deprecation of intellectuals, particularly students, who were for him mainly 'liberal ideologues, humanitarians of socialistic tendencies who, following the fashion from the European universities, feel that Imperialism hampers the normal development of national life and who dream of a liberal regime such as the Europeans have'.[28]

Humbert-Droz was not simply attacking windmills, as so often seemed to be the case in such diatribes. He was surely aware of the influence that students had in the foundation of left-wing parties (such as the APRA) which were to become rivals of the Communist parties. But, furthermore, he may have felt the necessity of countering some of the illusions his comrades might have harbored about the revolutionary potentialities of the petty-bourgeoisie. He might be still opposing what the Ecuadorian, Paredes, had said at the rostrum of the Sixth Congress,[29] as well as the Colombian, Cardenas. The latter went so far as to express the hope that the Latin American revolution be 'somewhat between a proletarian and a petty-bourgeois revolution'.[30]

Concerning the peasantry, Humbert-Droz went to Buenos Aires with a somewhat new thesis, but one which was not very detailed. He said that it was not correct to speak of peasants when referring to the workers in the rural areas. If they were paid in any way (as straight salary or some

form of recompense as, for instance, a small plot of land received from the landlord in loan), they were not peasants, they were proletarians. Since the great majority of the Latin American toilers were paid or recompensed agricultural workers, they were therefore proletarians.[31] The thesis of Humbert-Droz, if further elaborated and put into action from the tactical point of view, perhaps could have had a great significance, taking into consideration that he concluded that the only really revolutionary classes, the only ones interested in carrying out a revolution which would not stop after its first victories, were both the agricultural proletarians and the peasants, and the 'motor of revolution was the question of land, the struggle for land against the big feudal landowners and the foreign companies as well'.[32]

But once again, distrust of the peasantry springs up. Not only was Humbert-Droz's opinion ignored, but this lack of confidence included even the obvious leaders (once the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie were eliminated) of the revolutionary process: the urban proletariat. In these countries, this proletariat was, as Kuusinen had recalled at the rostrum of the Sixth Congress, too close, by its origins, to the peasantry. The same idea was expressed in the 'Proyecto' sent by the ECCI to Buenos Aires in 1929, in the following words:

> The big mass of the proletariat is formed by the agricultural workers, who live in conditions of semi-slavery. The industrial proletariat has not yet attained a degree of social differentation such as the European proletariat. It comes from the countryside and generally maintains ties with it. This peasant origin of most of the industrial workers provided most of its strength, eases and strengthens the alliance of the industrial proletariat with the peasant masses. But it also causes its ideological weakness, its lack of both organization and class consciousness.[33]

Thus, the proletariat was isolated and distrustful of both the urban petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry. The Communist Party distrusted even the urban proletariat. But it needed allies. Here arose the question of the political allies, the kind of alliances to make and all the questions connected with this problem.

In the years which followed the Sixth Congress, and mainly after the outbreak of the world economic crisis of 1929, what Kermit MacKenzie calls the 'do-it-alone' tendency became dominant in the Comintern.[34] The United Front policy, launched by Lenin himself at the Third Congress of 1921, entered a period of cold-storage.[35] For the Latin American Communists, however, it was obvious that those minuscule groupings that in most countries were their parties, were not able to launch a political campaign, still less a revolution, by them-

selves. At any moment, then, the question of allies had *nolens volens* to spring up.

At first the Latin American Communists were told that they ought not take the initiative of founding 'peasant' or 'peasant-workers' parties.[36] They also had to avoid forming part of a nationalist revolutionary party such as those being formed in Cuba and Venezuela.[37] Only in a few special cases might Communists, under the discipline of their own party, be allowed to enter such a party, in order to fight inside them against opportunism and reformism.[38] Moreover, the Party had to avoid permitting petty-bourgeois intellectuals to enter the Party unless they had previously passed through a long period of political and social activity in order to become 'mental' proletarians. Meanwhile, they had an organization where they could spend their time as well as their revolutionary energies: the Anti-Imperialist Leagues.[39]

By that time, the preferred kind of alliance was the formation of 'Workers and Peasant Blocks'. These 'blocks' were for the Comintern the organization which was best adapted to the 'from below' strategy of the United Front. It was the best form of keeping in touch with the masses influenced by the then so-called 'social-fascists' without running the danger that the Communist militants would themselves be contaminated by such a despicable disease.

What did this 'Block' mean? In general, the Comintern leaders answered such a question by saying what the block was *not*, what that block *ought not to be*. Thus, in Buenos Aires, Humbert-Droz told his comrades that such a block was not a party, still less a Communist Party.[40] It was not a trade union, and it was not recommended to form it by means of individual adhesions, even though some Argentinian provinces had had good results in doing so.[41] The block was not to be an alliance of parties, because in those blocks the only party which should be allowed to enter or infiltrate it must be the Communist Party. Otherwise, the workers' and peasants' block risked being polluted with petty-bourgeois ideology. The ideal block, said Codovilla in Buenos Aires, could

> form united front organisms and alliances of different social strata interested in the struggle against imperialism, but those blocks must be formed by means of collective adhesions, in order to be organs of a united front and to prevent them from becoming political parties of several social strata. The Peasant Leagues, the anti-Imperialistic Leagues, the Red International Aid, the Friends of Russia, etc., must be different mass groups in which the anti-imperialist elements could participate who cannot act in the proletarian party.[42]

Thus, the Comintern jettisoned parties which were or could become mass parties, such as the Colombian one, and proposed instead a kind of front where, putting aside the Peasants' Leagues and, perhaps the Anti-Imperialist Leagues, the spectrum of allies was so narrow that it was practically equivalent to proposing that the Communists make an alliance with themselves.

In those circumstances, the Latin American Communist parties were doomed never to achieve very important political goals. In this period, the Comintern's sections were not only isolated, but they did not even think of seizing power. The question of allies would spring up again, but in a very different manner, when the Comintern faced the problem of power in practical terms.

Roughly, it might be said that the Comintern showed then two different ways of approaching the problem, according to the two different ways of approaching power. The first way, when the Comintern attempted to seize power 'from outside', that is, organizing an insurrection, is exemplified by the case of Brazil in 1935. The second way, when the Comintern attempted to take power 'from within'; was the policy of National Union which eventually led to Browderism.

PART THREE

The question of power

7

The assault 'from outside': the *pronunciamiento* of Luis Carlos Prestes

The Communist insurrection of November 1935 in Brazil is perhaps more important because of various implications for the future than because of the real importance of the events that took place. Concerning those events, they were scarcely more than a typical military uprising (the classic Spanish *pronunciamiento*) both in theory and in fact. The rebellion was easily and rapidly defeated by the government of Getulio Vargas.

This *pronunciamiento* was, of course, very important in the history of Latin American Communism, but its importance does not stop there: it is important also from the viewpoint of the tactics and the programme of the International as a whole, not to speak of the resources it engaged in the adventure. It could be said also that the events in Brazil in 1935 marked the onset of a political attitude that henceforth would characterize that of Communists in Latin America: they would prefer systematically an alliance with a strong personality (not to speak of a strongman) rather than with an organized political party which could propose or, worse, impose independent tactics and a different and permanent leadership upon the whole alliance (or 'front').

Insurrection or 'mass politics'?

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935 marked a turning point in its tactics and moreover in its strategy. The insistence on the defence of democratic liberties, as well as the search for alliances in the successive elections in Spain and France and later Chile, might give the impression that the tactical reversal was to change from a sectarian, insurrectional attitude towards a pacific one. The Brazilian events show that at least in the short run, this was not the case.

Actually, the Brazilian 'revolution' of Prestes and the Communist Party seems to contradict almost every one of the new policies proposed

by the Comintern. Popular Front tactics were based upon the idea of enlarging the alliances of the Communist Parties with the working-class parties at first, then with the middle classes and in the end, even the anti-fascist fringe of the bourgeoisie. In Brazil, however, the National Liberation Alliance gave the impression of following a contrary course. That is, it went from a relatively large audience (not to say influence) to strict control over the NLA by the Communist Party and became at the end almost a simple disguise for the Party. The Popular Front suggested that the Comintern had changed from adventurism and revolutionary impatience, the conspiracy of little sects, to the opposite course of long, patient work among the 'masses', and using legal or, at least, pacific means. In Brazil, adventurism, insurrection, proselytism among soldiers and officers (the so-called *tenetismo*) were instead the chosen methods. The tactic proposed by the Seventh Congress presupposed the loosening of the links that tied the national sections to the central headquarters in Moscow. In Brazil, the International gave the impression of directly leading the uprising by means of its agents, some non-Brazilians among them.

However, at the beginning, the Comintern had presented its relation with the Brazilian section and also with the Alliance not as a model imposed from abroad, but as an example to follow in order to build the kind of Popular Front appropriate for colonial and semi-colonial countries. The representative of the Chinese Communist Party at the ECCI, Wang Ming, boasted of the example and the model given by the NLA. For him, it was to have and in some ways already had the following characteristics. Firstly it was 'an organization representing a revolutionary anti-imperialist bloc of classes' which was gathered 'on the initiative of the proletariat and the national revolutionary forces'. That the 'initiative of the proletariat' was all but a code-word for the Communist Party and the 'national revolutionary forces' were mainly the *tenentes*, was explained by Wang Ming himself in his speech: 'The National Liberation Alliance is supported by the Communist Party, and Communists have entered its organization together with members of many other political parties and groups (as for example, Tenentes, Trabalhistas, Socialist Parties of individual states, the Left-wing of the Liberal Alliance and others).'[1]

The 'Trabalhistas and Socialist parties of individual states' seems to point to the fact that there was not any kind of agreement, much less alliance, with those parties on the national level, that there were only affiliations of personalities and provincial groups, that is, state level groupings of the national organizations, which in fact hardly existed.

Moreover, a delegate from Brazil at the same Seventh Congress, Fernando de Lacerda, gave a somewhat different and really startling interpretation of the NLA. For him the NLA had 'helped the best trade-union leaders and a thousand workers from the Socialist Party of São Paulo, to join the ranks of the revolutionary workers, and those of the Communist Party'.[2]

Secondly, in contrast to the Chinese Kuomintang of 1925–7, when it was still a bloc of anti-imperialist organizations, the Brazilian NLA was

> a broad democratic organization based on individual and collective membership. Among its members are workers, trade unions, students and youth organizations, peasant leagues, etc. Many officers and enlisted army and navy men have affiliated themselves with the National Liberation Alliance. This popular and democratic character of the NLA considerably facilitates the struggle of the proletariat and its Communist Party for leadership within and without the Alliance.[3]

Thirdly, the NLA was an anti-imperialist united front and its three main demands were: (a) The struggle for the national independence of Brazil. It is said further that the Vargas government acted 'with the support and on the instructions of imperialism, primarily of British imperialism'. (b) The struggle against *latifundia*. (c) The struggle for popular democracy in defence of democratic rights and popular liberties.

Fourthly, given those conditions, the government of the NLA 'will be an *anti-imperialist* government *primarily*, but as yet it will not be a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry', and will include representatives of other classes 'among them also representatives of that part of the national bourgeoisie which at present temporarily still supports the struggle of the people'.[4]

The anti-imperialism of the alliance as seen by Wang Ming did not have as a goal either the expulsion of all foreign capitalists or the confiscation of their goods, but only the 'nationalization of the enterprises of those foreign capitalists who will not submit to the laws of the national government, and at the same time, it will come out in favour of foreign capital investments which will not affect the sovereignty of the Brazilian people'.[5]

That then, was the theoretical framework of the Alliance as seen at the rostrum of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International. But in practice, the situation was not exactly flawless with respect to the implementation of such policies. In general, it is not easy (and much less

so at that moment) to organize a mass front whose members accept, without protesting, the leadership of the Communist Party. If the chief of the alliance is a Communist himself, things are more complicated. Concerning this issue, the general resolution of this Congress enjoined a tactic that put the Communists in the situation of practising the abhorred *seguidismo*, that is, trailing behind 'bourgeois' nationalism and reformism; the formula used by the Congress being literally support 'the revolutionary movements *led* by the national reformists'.[6]

In Brazil, that problem was not a big one, at least in theory: there, the strongest personality was Luis Carlos Prestes. He was a man well known in the country, respected if not beloved even by people who had little or no connection with the Communist Party, having in Brazil and in Latin America the halo of a national and popular hero. He was not only a popular man among soldiers and officers of the Brazilian army, but he was also a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Moreover, his designation as leader of the Brazilian Communist Party could be considered at that moment as a wise move by the Comintern against the will of a sectarian section; Prestes was perhaps the only case in the history of the Comintern of a man who became a leader of its Executive Committee without being member of the Communist Party of his own country.

The affiliation of Prestes with the Communist Party was not, indeed, a surprise at that moment. At the beginning of the thirties, he had already announced his adhesion, but it had not become effective, perhaps because of the reluctance of the Brazilian Communists to accept his leadership. Prestes had then been tempted to organize a movement more or less independent of the Brazilian Communist Party. Moreover, when Prestes again announced his affiliation in 1934, he had already spent some years working as an engineer in the Soviet Union, invited (according to what might be a legend) by Stalin himself.[7]

Actually, the reluctance of the Brazilian Communists seemed to be more related to having Prestes as their leader than simply to having him as a member of the Party. But of course, such a distinction is impossible to make when it concerns such a strong personality as Prestes. The mood of Prestes' new comrades was not concealed: they gave the news of the affiliation of Prestes to the Comintern – and thus, automatically, to the Brazilian Communist Party – only ten lines on the last page of their central organ, because of 'lacking space' to comment on it.[8]

But in spite of all this, the Alliance showed an evolution exactly opposite to the Popular Front in France, Spain and Chile. At the beginning, the NLA seemed to attract some independent personalities, political men of various influence at different levels of the government

and the army, as well as the neutrality and a friendly mood from people who were not put off even when at a meeting, the young student Carlos Lacerda proclaimed Luis Carlos Prestes as Honorary President of the Alliance.[9] But, toward the end of 1935, that is, when approaching the moment of launching the insurrection, the Front organization lost, if not its character of a 'mass' movement (which perhaps it never had), its relative inclusiveness.

All that was not only, of course, the fault of the Communist Party or the Alliance. Whilst allowing the *Integralistas* (an avowedly fascist party) relative freedom of action, Vargas harassed the Alliance, cancelling the permits for its rallies. When the journal *A manhãa*, speaking up for the Alliance, threatened a general strike on July 12, 1935, the headquarters of the organization were raided by the police and its archives seized. So, it could be said that the adoption by the alliance of a more militant language was not the initial cause of the repression but, as one author has pointed out, 'simply accelerated the inevitable'.[10]

The communist and left-wing propaganda at the time tended to portray this difference in the mood of Vargas towards *Integralistas* and the National Liberation Alliance as proof of the fascist leanings of his government. Actually, Vargas had stronger political reasons for his actions than simple doctrinal congeniality. First, Prestes was apparently more dangerous than Plinio Salgado's *Integralistas*. He was perhaps as popular as Salgado and above all, still had some influence in the army. Secondly, the Alliance proposed a programme which Vargas himself could propose with reference to a lot of important points. In those circumstances, the Alliance was not a narrow sect of conspirators, but could become a political competitor, whose propaganda could appeal to the same people that Vargas wanted to influence. It could be said that the opposite was also true: the fact that the Alliance hoped to reach some people who so far had backed Vargas is seen in his manifesto *Ao povo!*, in which Prestes called the regime 'o governo trahidor[sic] de Getulio Vargas'.[11] Even if it is a commonplace of political language, particularly in Latin America, logically one can only denounce a friend or an ally as a traitor, but not an enemy. Last but not least, for Vargas it was perhaps not difficult to understand that a very conservative society could more easily back a government which faced a Communist uprising rather than one which faced a right-wing uprising.

Popular Front or 'pronunciamiento'?

The intention of this chapter is not to write the history of the November insurrection in Brazil,[12] but to see it in the perspective of the so-called

'general outline' of the Comintern. In other words, to understand its defeat and the isolation of the Alliance not only as a result of repression by the Vargas government (since repression is a normal response to a revolutionary movement), but from the viewpoint of the inability of Prestes and his followers to reach the 'great masses' and to convince them with the slogans of the Popular Front; as was done to a certain extent by the Comintern in France, Spain and Chile with ballots; and in China with armed struggle.

As happens perhaps in any revolution, this one had to confront the problem of making the choice between agitation and conspiracy, at the very moment of launching the insurrection. The 'dosage' and, moreover, the timing of such a choice is not only important, but so fundamental that the victory of a revolution may depend upon it. If this was the case in Brazil in 1935, it is because at least three facts can be observed which support such a thesis.

The first one concerns the programme published on July 5, 1935. Even if the tone of the manifesto was very militant, the nine point programme could be included in what was proposed for colonial countries within the framework of the Popular Front programme: what a national-popular government, a national-peasant movement, an agrarian-anti-imperialist revolution could achieve. What was shocking was the drawing of an uncrossable border line between 'those who would consolidate [. . .] the most brutal kind of fascist dictatorship', which seemed to point at the Vargas government, and 'the national liberty of Brazil with bread, land and liberty for its people'.[13] But what seemed to take by surprise not only some leaders of the Alliance but even the 'pacific' wing of the Communist Party was the demand for the installation of a new government *with Prestes at its head*,[14] which meant, logically, the overthrowing of Vargas: it was of course clear that such a change would not be effected by elections. Surprising also was the October-like final slogan of the manifesto: 'All power to the National Liberation Alliance!'.

Secondly, even if a political crisis was reaching its climax at that moment, the impression given by the insurgents was that their action had little to do with the political situation. The report of the American Embassy concerning the facts reflects this impression from the same day as the uprising.[15] It seemed to be, on the contrary, a movement provoked by military unrest due more to local conditions and institutional problems than to the influence of the propaganda of the Alliance. Many soldiers engaged in the upheaval seemed to have no clear idea of the political reasons for their action.

Finally, while the Communist and Alliance propaganda seemed appropriate only for the most engaged militants, Prestes himself dedicated most of his time to contacting his old comrades of the 1924 revolution against Bernardes, and some of the officers of the *Coluna Prestes*. That was of course necessary because he was engaged in a military adventure, but it underlined the fact that on the whole, the movement was conceived more as a classical military *pronunciamiento* than as a popular revolt. Even the *vivas* cried in the streets of Natal by the revolutionaries were just as much for the Twenty-First *Batalhão de Caçadores*, which started the revolt, as for the Alliance.[16]

Thus, the development of the actions in the November revolt seems to have followed a direction completely contrary to the 'general outline' of the Popular Front elsewhere. Instead of reaching the 'great masses', trying to reach a wider public with its propaganda, the Alliance ended, at the eve of the insurrection, speaking somehow for itself, which meant in fact speaking for the members of the Communist Party. So, it was very easy for the Vargas government to create an ambience of 'national union' against 'insurrectionist communism', that the sensationalist press portrayed with the traditional stereotypes of looting (not entirely false) and (mainly invented) sexual abuses.[17] 'Judging by the actions of the revolutionists in Natal during the three days of occupation' – said the American Consul at Pernambuco in a report sent during those same days – 'looting and drunken excesses were uppermost in their minds'.[18] Somewhat ingenuously he added in an amazed tone that 'their only significant gesture towards the proletariat was the enforced reduction of tram fares from 200 to 100 *reis* (about one-fifth of a cent) which would indicate that their ideas did not exclude payment for services rendered by a capitalist concern'.[19] Instead of seizing the occasion of a political crisis to develop it, launching an insurrection with larger popular support, the revolt seemed to have been conceived independently of that crisis, looking for support more from the garrisons than in the streets, and much less among the working class and the soldiers, than in the middle classes, civilians and military as well. In general, an analysis of the revolt seems to confirm what the American Consul wrote in his full report of events when the powder was, so to speak, still hot: 'Labor in general did not participate in the rebellion; in fact, it would appear that most of the civilian elements supporting the mutinous troops would ordinarily be classified as "riff-raff". In Pernambuco, the rebels are said to have resorted to impressment'.[20]

Concerning the revolt, the statistics compiled by Ronald H. Chilcote on Communist and military implication show that of 239 persons

charged with involvement in the revolt, nearly a quarter were identifiable as members and probable members of the Brazilian Communist Party, two of the leaders having been military officers. The percentage changed when coming to the NLA, where eight organizers charged in the plot were Communists, and seventeen were military officers. Of 79 'supporters' (rank-and-file?) of the revolt, half (or 35) were probably members of the Brazilian Communist Party, and thirty-four had a military affiliation. The other 122 participants were military men, 5 Communists among them. 'Nearly 75 per cent' of the total was military'.[21]

The above figures show that the revolt was a military uprising led by Communists who were either civilians or military officers. Given those circumstances, the NLA revealed itself as an alliance of the Brazilian Communist Party with the *prestistas* in the army and scarcely anything more. The question of who led whom to take up arms (the Communists leading the *prestistas* or vice versa) seems due to remain a rhetorical one because of the affiliation of Prestes with the Comintern, and his election to the ECCI before the November *pronunciamiento*. It is clear that the Comintern joined the adventure and led it openly, but probably under *prestista* pressure.

The most important fact was that the Comintern seemed to base its policies in Brazil much less on the trust owed to a national section than on that placed in a strong personality, whose affiliation with the party had been accepted reluctantly by its leaders, who feared that with this affiliation a too strong 'militarist' and insurrectionist current might enter the party and its Central Committee. It could be said that the Brazilian insurrection was conceived by the Comintern not as an alliance of the parties and organizations of the working class with those of the national bourgeoisie for the struggle against imperialism and fascism, but as an alliance of the ECCI of the Communist International with a very important, national and above all, military personality: Luis Carlos Prestes. As was easy to foresee, the insurrection and its defeat gave Vargas a pretext for decreeing an emergency and establishing martial law, thus enabling him to manage the crisis in the best possible conditions.

Comintern members in the revolt

The first of those conditions was the possibility of demanding 'national union' to back a government menaced by an insurrection not only inspired, but organized directly by 'Moscow agents'. Besides propa-

ganda and legend, what was the real direct engagement of the Comintern in the Brazilian revolt? From the very moment of the uprising, two tendencies were in opposition regarding this point. On the one hand, there was the anti-Communist, governmental and sensationalist press of Brazil and elsewhere, whose inclination was to exaggerate not only the political and military leadership of the International in the revolt, but above all, its financial support of the insurrectionists. On the other hand, the Communist press launched a campaign aimed at presenting the Comintern agents simply as 'anti-fascist refugees'. The central organ of the Comintern, some four months after the events, gave this angelic version of the participation of the German Communist, Arthur Ewert ('Harry Berger'), in Brazilian affairs: 'his sole crime is that he has, for many years and long before Hitler came to power, interested himself in colonial questions and as an emigrant chose as his place of residence a country where he believed he could best study these questions'.[22]

The Vargas government claimed to have evidence of the direct intrusion of Moscow not only, as was evident, through its agents, but also by its financial support through the Uruguay-based Soviet tourist or trade agency, 'Iumtourg'.[23] This aspect was the leitmotiv of the Vargas version of the events from the first moment, and for some time thereafter. Nevertheless, it was impossible to force Arthur Ewert to give the least proof of such support, or even to give the clue for deciphering the code of the secret messages seized by the police at his hide-out. Both Ewert and his wife Elisa ('Machla Lenczycki') admirably resisted their tormenters[24] and some weeks later, the American Embassy cabled to the Secretary of State that the Police Chief of Rio, Fellinto Müller, said that they had not yet any documentary evidence 'as to the actual source of funds, and he seemed to believe that it would probably be impossible to apprehend evidence of this nature in Brazil'.[25]

Ewert and his wife immediately became the centre of a propaganda campaign in the press as well as by the government which had, with them in custody, proof of having saved the country from a foreign-led conspiracy. Perhaps more than Ewert himself, his wife 'Machla' was the object of particular attention in a Catholic and traditionalist country. She became the 'mysterious woman' for the popular press. 'Mysterious', she was of course, because she was a foreigner who had entered Brazil with a forged passport and lived underground while preparing the insurrection. But she was no more 'mysterious' than the other agents of the Comintern, Prestes included, who used a lot of false names, among them, according to a diplomatic source, the really unusual one of

Behring Pontes![26] But for the Brazilian press every woman somehow related with the Comintern automatically became 'mysterious': in 1937, an American lawyer, David Levinson, went to Brazil sent by the Prestes–Ewert Committee of the United States, with the intention of participating in their defence. He went in the very bourgeois companionship of his wife. Immediately, she became 'the mysterious woman' behind this 'Comintern agent'.[27]

Perhaps the best way to determine the actual involvement and importance of Ewert is his own spontaneous confession to a member of the American Embassy sent to investigate this possessor of an American passport who apparently had led a Communist revolt in Brazil.[28] Ewert, when he spoke with him, was in terrible physical condition: his tormenters themselves informed the American official, Xanthaky, that Ewert had had no rest for the past eight days. Once convinced that the American diplomat was not attempting to cross-examine him on behalf of his captors, Ewert spoke more freely, giving Xanthaky a fascinating personal account which not only revealed Ewert's past (which would have made a great novel) but which also would have served as a good 'identikit' of an 'international agent' of the Comintern.

Arthur Ewert (or 'Harry Berger') was not, of course, simply an 'anti-fascist refugee' in Brazil. He was what Communist jargon calls a 'cadre', in some way a sub-leader of the organization. According to his own words, he was a member of the Communist parliamentary group at the German Reichstag from 1928 to 1930; after this date, he was picked up by the Comintern which sent him to direct the political work in South America. It was not his first mission on behalf of the International,[29] it was also not to be his last trip to South America. Around 1932 he went to Shanghai via the United States where he and his wife obtained forged American passports. In Shanghai, he carried out illegal political work, and in 1934 he left for Russia. Some months later he was again sent to Latin America. Even if Ewert was not a member of the ECCI, and only an unsuccessful candidate for that post, he was a man who had proved himself as a militant, a 'professional revolutionary', as he himself said, for 'almost thirty years', even though this was perhaps simply a manner of speaking.[30]

Besides Prestes himself, Ewert was the most important man that the Comintern involved in the Brazilian adventure. Of the former South American Secretariat, the most prominent leader caught in Brazil was Rodolfo Ghioldi. Codovilla was perhaps too significant in the ECCI to take the risk of doing this work himself, although he did undertake it a year later in Spain.

Ewert was not merely a theoretical adviser to Prestes and his comrades. Actually, even if it could claim some successes in its political work, the Communist Party of Brazil was not considered perhaps as a 'big' party in the Comintern, even on a South American scale. When the police entered Ewert's hide-out and seized his files, they found not only the political manifestos and journals published by the Communist Party and the Alliance, but, as the American Ambassador wrote 'an extensive correspondence with Communist agents in other South American countries (particularly Uruguay, Argentina and Chile)'.[31] Moreover, he had several letters with suggestions for the work in different parts of Brazil (São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, Rio de Janeiro), and even the minutes of a Regional Committee of the Communist Party.[32] So, it seems evident that he did not go to Brazil to counsel or lead the party through other people, but to participate directly in organizational matters; very dangerous given his condition as a foreigner who had entered the country with a forged passport.

But even taking all of the above into consideration, the question of who led whom to take up arms still remains. That the *prestistas* exaggerated their own influence among the army and the civilians can be inferred by the disastrous results of the revolution, but this is always a very easy explanation for defeat. But perhaps the timing of the uprising was, as usual, accelerated by the more militant wing (not to speak of mad-hatters) of the revolutionaries. In any case, it came as a surprise for Ewert, as his wife told the same American commentator.[33] Ewert himself said that he had nothing to do with the army, because this was the task of the chief, Prestes. All this could be taken as a defence, but it has its inner logic; it would not have been easy to have an audience among militia men for launching a nationalist revolution if one of its leaders were a foreigner who surely spoke Portuguese with a strong German accent. Furthermore, even if his submissiveness toward the Comintern would be demonstrated by Prestes for as long as it lasted, he was nevertheless a *caudillo* who could accept counsel in political but hardly in military matters.

Together with Ewert and Ghioldi, there were some other foreigners charged with involvement in the Brazilian revolt. But they seemed to be either much less important or their responsibilities not very clearly or sufficiently demonstrated.[34]

If the Brazilian revolt had exploded before the Seventh World Congress, perhaps its defeat might have been analysed in this meeting. But the Brazilian events did not exercise any influence on the Comintern's policy such as did the defeat of the Chinese Communist Party

before and during the Sixth World Congress. It is true that the Comintern, after the reform of the statutes in 1935, found it possible to avoid a direct analysis of facts, and to claim that it was an internal affair of the Brazilian Party, but that was evidently contradicted by the presence in Brazil of Arthur Ewert and Rodolfo Ghioldi. After the crushing of the rebellion, the Comintern preferred to launch a campaign to save Prestes, Ewert and other 'anti-fascist' refugees, rather than make a public analysis which could hinder the solidarity campaign. As has been already mentioned, Eudocio Ravines claimed in his memoirs that Brazil was nothing more than a kind of 'Guinea pig' for the Comintern. It supposedly tried in this country a mixture of Popular Front and insurrectionist tactics. However, in the memoirs of Ravines nothing is very clear. He writes too long after his break with the Comintern, and the intention of his book is more polemical than historical. There is, between the facts themselves and the account he gives, a thick screen of struggles and polemics with his old comrades.

In any case, it is practically impossible to explain the rebellion of Prestes without taking into account the Ibero-American political and military traditions; without taking into account the existence of *prestismo* in the army. As it will be seen in the following chapter, it is also very difficult to explain it as a rational step in furthering world revolution because world revolution was no longer the aim of the Comintern. It is impossible to explain it without taking into account the personality of Luis Carlos Prestes. It cannot be said, then, that the Brazilian revolt was either a consequence of the new policy of the Comintern after the Seventh Congress, or that it was an action typical of the previous sectarian 'third period'. The only word for it is perhaps the Spanish *pronunciamiento*: in the end, the rebellion was more an action of *prestismo* than an initiative of Communism.

The fact is that after 1935, the sections of the Comintern would never try again to 'do-it-alone' or to lead an insurrection. On the contrary, they would do everything in order to be accepted as allies within any kind of National Front. They would practise full class-collaboration. If they attempted an approach to power, they would prefer to try taking it 'from inside', a policy that in the end flowed into Browderism.

8

The taking 'from inside': national union

The year 1935 is significant not only for the Latin American Communists and not only because of the Brazilian events. Perhaps the most important year in the history of the Comintern since its foundation in 1919 was 1935. After 1935, what can be called the 'institutional' life of the Comintern was so reduced that it might be tempting for the historian to desist from any further analysis of the world organization as a whole.[1] What Lenin had called 'the most important principles' of the Comintern, that is, 'the proletarian dictatorship and the Soviet power' were relinquished in 1935 to be replaced by the defence of bourgeois democracy and power, not for the proletariat, but for an alliance of the proletarian parties (the Communists and the previously despised Social-Democrats) with the 'anti-fascist' bourgeoisie, aimed generally at backing the latter's power. The rigid centralism of the International was also replaced, at least formally, by what Zinoviev would have considered in 1920 as something close to 'a loose propaganda association'. In fact, it was the idea of world revolution which fell apart. Thus, of course, the need for an international party to hasten it became superfluous.

Two events served to strengthen the will of the Comintern towards self-dissolution. The first was the dismantling in 1933 of the most powerful section of the Third International, the Communist Party of Germany. The second was the beginning, in 1936, of the Civil War in Spain. The Comintern centred all its attention there: what can be considered its last political and military actions involved the sending of the International Brigades to fight for the Republic, as well as some of its most important leaders (Togliatti, André Marty, Antonov-Ossenko and even the Argentinian Codovilla), to help the still small Communist Party of Spain to expand in numbers and influence as it did during those years. The end of the Spanish Civil War preceded shortly the beginning of World War II, when the Comintern had to cease functioning for all practical purposes.

If 'the victory of Stalin over the Party' was completed after the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern in 1928, what can be called 'the victory of Stalin over the International' was fully completed at the Seventh World Congress of 1935.[2] After this date, it is perhaps possible to propose a new period that could be called 'the victory of Stalin over the Communist parties', which led them eventually to propose self-dissolution. The most extreme tendency of this policy was seen in the Western hemisphere, and was called 'Browderism' because after World War II, some of its exponents in Latin America claimed that it was because they had fallen under the influence of Earl Browder, the Secretary General of the Communist Party of the United States, that such a policy was able to spread in the Caribbean area, 'polluting' with class-collaboration the Communist Parties of Cuba, Venezuela and some others.

This explanation, present in the so-called self-criticisms made by the Communist Parties of the area after 1945, does not resist the simplest analysis. As early as 1938, perhaps before, the Comintern clearly showed its determination to go further than the Popular Front. Its new proposition was nothing less than National Union, the *Union Sacrée* so strongly deprecated by Lenin in 1914, when it was put into practice by the German and French 'Social-patriots'.

Such a policy was the opposite of the idea of world revolution. Consequently, to study the history of the Comintern after 1935 in terms of its ultimate aim of world revolution could be considered worthless, because it had become (if it still meant anything) scarcely more than a pious wish. In truth, the idea of world revolution was still alive, but it was being considered from the opposite point of view. That is, if the policy of what remained of the Comintern after 1935 was the opposite of world revolution, it was then a policy of which the ultimate aim was to preclude world revolution. In 1919, the Comintern had started its work *for* world revolution. In 1935 it finished by working *against* world revolution.

That is why it is impossible to understand the rebellion of Prestes with reference to the aim of world revolution, but also why it is so difficult to understand the Comintern's policy in Latin America after 1935 with reference to the less ambitious policy of Popular Front. Of course, it can be said that the Popular Front was conceived to be applied in Europe, and that in 1935 what the Comintern proposed for the colonial world was a tactic of anti-imperialist United Front.[3]

But the fact is that what was proposed actually in Latin America was a sort of United Front not *against* imperialism, but *including* American

imperialism as an ally. This policy cannot be directly linked, as it is generally stated, to the entry of the United States in the war and the alliance that resulted between the United States and the Soviet Union. It cannot be linked because it is previous to 1941. It has to be linked perhaps more to the understanding by Stalin of the fact that Franklin Delano Roosevelt was interested in intervening in the coming European war; that he was ready to fight against Germany well before the outbreak of hostilities. In those conditions, a different policy had to be proposed. This is why, in spite of the vocabulary used in Comintern propaganda during 1935–9; in spite also of the victory of the Chilean Popular Front, the fact that the preferred tactic of the Comintern sections was, mainly after 1938, not the Popular Front but the National Union, arises from following the facts in their simple chronological development.

This also enables us to analyse a somewhat popular version of both the Brazilian and Chilean Communist policies in the late thirties, confronting it with those facts. When Eudocio Ravines wrote in his memoirs that the insurrectional policy of the Comintern in Brazil in 1935 and the peaceful and legal tactics of the Communist Party in Chile in 1936–8 were nothing more than a sort of Solomonic solution of the Comintern leadership to the questions of taking power; and added that Brazil and Chile were the 'Guinea pigs', his version was immediately taken up by anti-Communist mythology: the 'solution' revealed the Machiavellian, the fiendish character of Communists; for them, it was evident, the end justified the means.[4]

The Ravines version of events was not only the anti-Communist explanation for that matter. It was for a relatively long time the only one, the Comintern itself having refused to make public its own analysis. It would be useful, therefore, to examine the relationship of the Chilean Communist Party with the Comintern; the importance of that party with regard to the Brazilian and other parties of the continent; and finally, the new mood of the agonizing Comintern.

Chile: 'unbeloved child' of the Comintern

In spite of the revolutionary traditions of the Chilean working class, which in 1912 enabled Recabarren to found the Socialist Workers Party, that was to be a fertile ground for seeding by the Comintern; in spite also of its early adherence to the Third International, the Communist Party of Chile was never considered by the Comintern as one of its most important Latin American sections. In 1924, the report of activities of the ECCI was laconic when speaking of its Chilean

section. After noting that the ECCI had not yet established a 'satisfactory connection' with it, the report added, that in any case, 'nothing of moment' had happened in this party. The report recognized nevertheless that 'The Communist Party of Chile exercises considerable influence over the trade union movement of the country'.[5]

Four years later, the ECCI tried to be somewhat more explicit. One of its reports dedicated four pages to Chile. It recounts the work of a party which had been able to lead a large general strike in 1927 in the provinces of Tarapacá, Antofagasta and Iquique. At the same time, overcoming the repression of General Carlos Ibañez del Campo (800 workers were killed and 10,000 deported to the Mas-Afuera island, according to the report), the Chilean section of the Comintern had been able to elect seven deputies and two senators to the parliament. It also published, before being made illegal in 1927, 'five papers, and several weeklies and magazines'.

Undoubtedly, that was a description of a party which was, by Latin American standards, important and fairly consolidated. Nevertheless, the Chilean Party did not seem to have yet triumphed over the wariness that the ECCI showed towards it. Perhaps this distrust originated in what the ECCI itself called in its report 'a lack of a sufficiently strong leadership'. In fact, the ECCI added that the majority of the Chilean Central Committee had been infected during the period 1924–5 with 'certain opportunist deviations' and later, it had not yet been able to become a stronger leading group.[6]

If the Chilean party was not an important section of the Comintern for the ECCI, it was in no different a situation from that of any other Communist Party of Latin America during the existence of the Comintern. As a matter of fact, in his report to the last Congress, when speaking of 'the most important sections' of the Comintern, Wilhem Pieck spoke of the Communist Party of the United States and even of the still small Communist Party of Spain, but no mention was made of Latin America, where the Comintern was on the eve of launching an insurrection.[7] Moreover, it seems evident that even in this particular area, the Chilean party was equated with or even considered less important than other Latin American parties which were in fact, smaller and less developed. Thus, the already quoted report of activities of the ECCI between the Fourth and the Fifth World Congress dedicated eight pages to Mexico and its very small Communist Party and only four pages to the Chilean party, whose successes even the ECCI had been obliged to recognize. Nine pages were published on Argentina, four and a half on Cuba, the same quantity on Uruguay. The small parties of Colombia,

Ecuador and Brazil were the only ones which received less space than Chile in the report of the ECCI.

Of course, Mexico, Brazil and Argentina are bigger countries than Chile. The ECCI was speaking somewhat in terms of national power: Chile was small, with a relatively small population and, seemingly marginal from the industrial and strategic viewpoint. But it was by no means less relevant in those areas than Ecuador, Colombia or even Cuba. The last named at that moment was almost a colony of the United States; it had practically no political life under the dictatorship of Machado; and its Communist Party, founded scarcely three years before, could be considered by no means stronger than its Chilean brother party.

A Chilean was, however, elected to the ECCI at the Sixth World Congress of 1928. But it should not be forgotten, that 1928 marked the moment of the 'discovery of America', and thus with the Chilean, six more natives from the New World entered the ECCI, among them a representative of the incipient parties of Colombia and Ecuador.[8] Furthermore, the participation of Chile in this congress was by no means remarkable and, so to speak, the 'stars' of the Latin American delegations were the Ecuadorian Paredes and, of course, the *habitués* of the Comintern's meetings, that is, the parties of Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, the latters' delegates speaking at the opening session of the Sixth Congress.

Seven years later, the position of Chile did not appear to have improved. The Latin American meeting previous to the Seventh Congress, the so-called, 'Third Conference', supposedly held at Montevideo in October 1934 (but which probably met in Moscow), dealt with the situation in Brazil, Cuba and Peru, but it gave no importance to the case of Chile. In 1935 both the Brazilian, Luis Carlos Prestes, and the Cuban, Blas Roca, were elected to the ECCI as well as the Argentinian Rodolfo Ghioldi, but no new member of the Chilean Communist Party was then elected: the alleged 'Guinea pig' did not merit such an honour.

The treatment accorded then to Chile seems very strange, if the Comintern intended, as Ravines claimed, to use Chile as a proving ground for the application of a given tactic. Such an attitude was not in the traditions of the Comintern. Through changes and reversals, the International nevertheless conserved at least an aspect of its Machiavellian character, which obliged it not to conceal *how* a given policy was to be put into practice. Moreover, it is not easy to explain the fact that the Comintern would keep secret its intention of putting into practice a largescale, legal and pacific tactic for taking power, and speak more or

less openly about a country where it intended to launch an insurrection. Furthermore, in his speech at the Seventh World Congress, the Chilean delegate Carlos Contreras Labarca ('Borkes') told his comrades that his party had the intention of fighting for converting the block of left-wing parties already formed in Chile (and which the Communist Party had decided to join) into 'a large anti-imperialist united front; into an alliance of national liberation taking the alliance formed in Brazil as a model; into an alliance to struggle for national liberation and democratic liberties'.[9] Nowhere in this speech is present the idea of opposing or even comparing the tactic to be used in Chile with that to be used in Brazil.

After 1935, one more element has to be taken into consideration: the war in Spain. If after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern the policies developed by the different Communist Parties owe more to the Communist Parties themselves than to the Comintern as a world organization, it was not due solely to the 'institutional' fact of having changed the statutes. That formality was reinforced by a political circumstance which can be said to be the real cause: the Spanish rebellion. The Comintern *had to be* less interested in mixing directly in the internal affairs of the individual Communist parties (and moreover, parties as unimportant as those of Latin American) because of the single reason that it was too busy in Spain.

In Latin America even the Argentinian party seemed to become less important for the Comintern than those of Brazil and Cuba. However, the position of Chile in the ranking of the Comintern in Latin America did not improve. This does not mean that the Comintern did not show interest in the Chilean affairs or that it did not try to become directly involved. Even if Ravines overstated his own importance for political reasons, and also because it is usual to do that when writing memoirs, it is hardly deniable that he was an envoy of the Comintern, as well as Manuel Cazon and the Venezuelan, Martínez. But the present state of sources does not allow much more to be said about the matter. However, it does seem feasible to conclude that the version of the two 'Guinea pigs' (the unsuccessful insurrectionist tactic in Brazil under Prestes' leadership; the successful election tactic in Chile under Ravines') does not stand up to internal criticism.

Finally, it is worth believing that the 'unbeloved child' of the Comintern had also delivered in turn what might be called a 'too-late-born-son' of the Popular Front. The victory of the Chilean Popular Front happened at a moment when its European counterparts were on the eve of being dismembered. In France, it had practically ceased to exist; in

Spain, it was being defeated by the Fascists. The victory of the Chilean Popular Front in the elections for president came after Munich. Ricardo Martínez, the old Venezuelan bureaucrat of the Comintern wrote then, probably from Santiago, that this victory came:

> at the moment when the blow against democracies delivered at Munich was still fresh.
> [. . .] It cleared the fog of defeatism that might have begun to set as a result of Munich. It will strengthen Latin America as a democratic force in world events. Furthermore, it strengthens democratic sentiments in the United States and gives stronger impetus to President Roosevelt's good-neighbour policy – a new step toward making the western hemisphere a united force for democracy. [10]

The last sentence is very clear. Of course, the victory of the Popular Front had to be hailed by the Comintern in its newspaper and propaganda, had to be boasted of as an achievement of its own policy. But the Comintern was already, so to speak, changing the object of its love. The Comintern, or better, its individual sections, were thinking of something better than the original framework of the Popular Front: they were thinking of National Unity. They were taking the broad way that would lead them to abjure the proletarian dictatorship, Soviet power, world revolution and class struggle. They were passing through the wide gate that led to dissolution of the Communist Parties. They were taking the first steps which would lead them to Browderism.

The Cuban Communist Party and the first government of Fulgencio Batista

On 24 December 1938, the Comintern organ *World News and Views* (formerly *Inprecorr*) published an article signed by Abed Brooks, its correspondent in La Habana. The article spoke of Batista's 'change of attitude' and said that it was 'of the utmost importance in the political life of the country'. The author recalled that Batista came to power by deposing Grau San Martín, who had come to office 'through an uprising of the people against the blood-stained dictatorship of Machado'. Notwithstanding such an origin, said Brooks,

> during the last few months there has been a fresh turn. Montalvo and Casanovas, sugar plantation magnates, and the head of the most influential newspaper of La Habana, the *Diario de la Marina*, Pepin Rivero, who are the leaders of the struggle against the democratic people's movement, are conspiring to overthrow Batista from his place of power. Batista – who betrayed the revolution in 1933, and crushes strikes with the same bloody methods as

Machado – no longer represents the centre of reactionary drive. And therefore, the people who are working for the overthrowing of Batista, both in the United States and in Cuba, are no longer acting in the interest of the Cuban people.[11]

The article was written cautiously. For someone used to the suddenness of the tactical reversals of Communists, the prudence shown in taking a new political attitude must have seemed strange. 'There is no reason' said the same article 'to exaggerate the extent and the importance of these concessions [made by Batista to the popular democratic forces],' because if Batista was changing it was due 'undoubtedly to the economic crisis'. However, the article showed that the Communist Party of Cuba was looking for some kind of an alliance with the strongman Batista. At the same time, he had been doing the same thing with his mortal enemy, Ramón Grau San Martín. The latter seemed to be an ideal 'fellow-traveller'. The same text described him in the following terms: 'He is not a good political organizer nor a theoretician, and appears to be haunted by fears that he may be ruled by the Communists in the unity party, which would cost him the support of the United States.' And since it had not yet been possible to form a unity party including Batista, Grau San Martín and themselves, the Communists and Revolutionary Union (the legal para-Communist party led by the writer Juan Marinello) wanted to support a movement to put into power a constitutional government under the leadership of Grau San Martín.

In spite of the goodwill of the Communists and of Grau himself, the forming of a unity party of the Cuban left was not an easy move, because of the adamant opposition of the younger ally of Grau, Eduardo Chibás, to any kind of alliance with the Communist Party. The Communists decided then to begin a move toward the strongman in the government. Batista needed mass support, particularly from the organized working class.[12] In May 1938, he allowed the publication of the Communist newspaper *Hoy*, and two months later the Tenth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party decided to adopt a more positive attitude toward Batista in order to oblige him to act reciprocally. Some days later, 'Blas Roca' and Joaquin Ordoqui (another leader of the party) went to the military camp of Colombia for a conference with Colonel Fulgencio Batista.[13] The alliance between the Cuban section of the Communist International and the strongman Batista began: it was to last six years and eventually lead two important leaders of the Party, Juan Marinello and Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, to enter the government as ministers. In 1939 the Communists, with the support of Batista, formed the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC), which under the permanent leadership of Lázaro Peña became the favourite of the Ministry of Labour.[14]

It is necessary to remember some dates: 1938 and 1944 are those of the collaboration and the alliance of the Cuban Communists with Batista. During that same time, the Secretary General of the Communist Party of the United States, Earl Browder, who after 1935 had changed his opinion about Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 'who was no longer a "fascist" president but a great democrat',[15] moved closer to the so-called 'isolationist' camp after the Nazi–Soviet Pact, to become again a partisan of Roosevelt in 1941. But in this same year the United States Communist Party cut off its organizational affiliation with the Comintern in order to avoid the obligation of registering as an agent of a foreign power under the Voorhis Act of 1940 and Browder entered the Atlantic Penitentiary to serve a four-year term for travelling with forged passports.[16] In those circumstances, Earl Browder could not have had any influence, either in his country or abroad. The political attitude of the Cuban Communists had practically nothing to do with a theoretical influence coming from the American Communist Party. What was later called 'Browderism' had not yet been born: Browder did nothing more than the leaders of the Communist Parties everywhere concerning alliances. When the Communist leader in Cuba, Blas Roca, announced in 1944 that the imperialist era had finished,[17] he was speaking much less under the influence of Browder than as a consequence of his own political experience: six years of 'class-collaboration' with Batista and his main ally, the United States of America.

Thus, when by 1944, Browder pretended to have encountered his class-collaboration road to Damascus in Teheran, and proposed to change his party into a 'political association', what interested the Cuban Communists was not the possibility of erasing the word 'party' from their name, but rather the word 'Communist'. Blas Roca proposed to change it to Socialist Popular Party, because, he said, if 'yesterday we refused stubbornly to change our name, because this name meant opposition to everything we wanted to fight against, today we say that it is necessary to change our name because this change means to attract everything we need and we want to unite for accomplishing a new period'.[18] The central slogan of the newly baptised party was as mild as possible: 'Economic progress, social security, victory and popular peace.'[19]

The Venezuelan Communists in 1938–44

There are great differences between the Cuban and the Venezuelan Communist parties as organizations in 1938. The Cuban party was already one of the 'big' parties of the International and its chief, Blas

Roca, was also a member of the ECCI. It had had an active political role since its founding in 1925, under the Machado dictatorship and afterwards. The Venezuelan party formed itself in August 1937 and its first public performance, the publishing of a manifesto, was dated in 1938. Before this date, the Venezuelan Communists worked within some left-wing democratic organizations which were generally labelled as 'Communist' by right-wing propaganda. Moreover, in 1938, when the Cuban Communist Party was looking to constitute a united party with Grau San Martín, the Venezuelan party was separating itself from the united party led by Rómulo Betancourt. The Cuban Communists arrived at legality just when the Venezuelan Communists went further underground. In spite of these differences, the tactics of both the Cuban and Venezuelan Communist Parties were astonishingly similar. They were similar not only in their formulation (which was normal, both being in any case sections of the same world party), but also in the timing of their reactions to the political situations in their respective countries.

Thus, in October 1938, *El Martillo*, the underground newspaper of the Venezuelan Section of the Communist International, published an article signed by its Secretary General 'Juan Pirela' (Juan Bautista Fuenmayor). Speaking about the government of General Eleazar López Contreras (1936–41), Fuenmayor said:

> López Contreras, notwithstanding his conservative ideology and his links with some sectors of Imperialism, cannot be considered as an element of the reactionary pro-Fascist forces.
>
> Proof of this lies in the fact that, even if there are within his régime some agents of Gómez [the old dictator of Venezuela who died in 1935] and Fascism, it has not degenerated into the brutal dictatorship that the *Gomecistas* want. López Contreras is carrying out a middle-of-the-road policy between pro-Fascist and moderate elements in his government. Undoubtedly, among the causes of these oscillations are the progressive aspects of Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy, the weakness of the American oil companies today without the political, diplomatic and military support of the USA government . . . and the growing force of the anti-Gómez front.[20]

The only reason it cannot be said that this article echoed that of Brooks on Cuba, quoted previously, is that this one was published two months earlier. But the move toward General López Contreras, looking to separate him from the 'more reactionary Fascist' sectors of his government was very like the move of the Cuban Communists toward Colonel Batista, albeit differently received.

The similarity was not implicit but rather explicit. Approximately

six months later, the Venezuelan Communist Party held its second National Conference. The final resolution said that notwithstanding the weakening of the democratic front in Europe,

> in our America there is a strengthening of the anti-Fascist front, thanks to the success of the national revolutionary government of Mexico, to the new democratic orientation of the Batista government, of the Chilean Popular Front, of the Colombian democratic-liberal government, and of the democratic-progressive government of Roosevelt.[21]

Both texts were written at the same time and perhaps by the same hand. An interesting aspect of this latter text is the listing it contains of democratic-progressive governments of Latin America, in which the Popular Front of Chile (where the Communists were in fact actors in the whole process) is coupled with other governments and political processes where the Communists were mostly spectators and more supporters than allies. In both texts, however, the repetition of Roosevelt's name indicates that it is evidently the most important element in the analysis of the situation according to the Comintern. In other words, as pointed out by K. S. Karol, the tactics of the Communist Parties of Latin America were conditioned by Stalin's analysis of the significance of the government of Roosevelt. The President of the United States manifested, in words and in deeds, that he was strongly anti-Fascist. He saw Germany, more than Japan, as the real menace for the United States. Hitler was also the worst enemy of the Soviet Union and of Communism. Thus at that time Stalin had a benevolent attitude toward the United States. So did the Latin American Communists. Their anti-imperialism passed to a secondary plane.[22]

In the following months, the Communist Party of Venezuela continued its move to approach the López Contreras government. When the moment came to choose a successor for the Presidency, the Communist Party stated publicly that it was ready to support any candidate who would 'certainly and positively answer to the more democratic moments [a clear allusion to the first year of that government in 1936] of the López administration . . .'.[23]

However, López Contreras was not Batista. He was neither a dictator nor the product of a revolution betrayed, as happened in Cuba in 1933 with Batista. He was a man of conservative views and, when the election of 1941 approached, he chose as his successor another man who supposedly shared his own ideas. In fact, the man chosen, the then Colonel Isaías Medina Angarita, was suspected of having Fascist leanings. After the German–Soviet Pact of 1939, and before the

invasion of the Soviet Union by the Wehrmacht, the Communist Party assumed the same position as its comrades elsewhere, which meant becoming more isolated. Nevertheless, the Communist Party of Venezuela did not change its attitude of distrust towards the 'Fascist' Medina, and when López Contreras eventually made up his mind and chose Medina, it refused to accept him, and announced its support for the 'symbolic'[24] candidate of the party of Rómulo Betancourt, the well-known novelist, Rómulo Gallegos.[25] In fact, its opposition to Medina made no difference in the election, and the lacklustre support for Gallegos was not solicited and perhaps not much welcome.

After 1941, with the new president elected and after the United States had entered the war, the tactics of the Venezuelan Communist Party began to change rapidly. The simple support shown in 1942 became quickly not only an alliance, but in fact an adherence without conditions.[26] This alliance not only went so far as to present common lists of candidates for some local elections, but also to help the government openly to organize its own 'bourgeois' party.[27]

Thus, when Browder began to make his ideas known, the Communist Party of Venezuela received them gladly. Some opposition within the party was directed less against Browder than against Ricardo A. Martínez, the permanent Venezuelan bureaucrat of the Comintern. Martínez (better known in Venezuela by his familiar nickname of 'Rolito'), had returned to his country after having worked closely with Browder in the United States. The enemies of the former within the party, fearful of frontally attacking such an important leader of the Comintern as the Secretary General of the United States Communist Party, accused Martínez of having 'badly translated' Browder into Spanish.[28]

The leaders of the Communist Party of Venezuela were less interested than the Cubans in Browder's ideas related to the name of the party or its dissolution as an independent organization. The reason was that they were not yet legal (albeit working freely) and were fighting to become legalized. Thus they put the accent on 'class-collaboration'. In this realm, the Communist Party of Venezuela seemed to go further than any of their fellow parties in America and in the world, for if others renounced making any propaganda for a Socialist society and Socialist revolution, the Venezuelan Communist Party relinquished the same even for a democratic-bourgeois revolution. In a series of articles printed in the legal Communist newspaper *Aquí Está!*, its Secretary General repudiated the idea of continuing to speak of the three traditional issues present in all the slogans of the Left and moreover, of the Communist

Party: those of an agrarian, anti-imperialist democratic revolution. The articles, which in order to underline their Browderist origin had the common title of 'In defence of Teheran' stated that 'the present situation is unprecedented in history and therefore, neither Marx, Engels nor Lenin, not even Stalin himself could have foreseen it'.[29]

The articles were, in general, a confessed *resumé* of the ideas of Browder 'and other parties', supposedly the Cuban and the Chilean. As with Browder, the most interesting aspects are the political conclusions, which were expressed by Fuenmayor in negative terms:

> It is not by means of the confiscation of the *latifundia* and the distribution among the peasants that we can advance forwards . . . because that would push all the landowners into the arms of Fascists. It is not by means of the expropriation of all imperialists that we can attain national liberation, because we might create a conflict with American or British capitalism, reinforcing in this way the position of the Fascists who are conspiring in our country. It is not by means of the opposition to the government that we can attain the democratization of public powers . . .[30]

Fuenmayor thought perhaps that he was copying the ideas, later considered heterodox, of Earl Browder. Actually, he was acting within the strictest orthodoxy of the Stalinist Comintern.

9

The last step: Browderism

The real origin of Browderism

The Cuban and the Venezuelan were, together with the Colombian, the Communist Parties which most openly accepted the ideas of Earl Browder, quoted him by name and, after his political liquidation by means of a famous article by the French leader Jacques Duclos,[1] were those which made their self-criticism by explaining their 'deviations' as a consequence of Browder's influence over them. The class-collaboration policies of these parties preceded, as has been seen, the theoretical developments of the American leader. But theirs were not isolated cases in the International. In 1937, before an assembly of the Parisian Communists, Maurice Thorez, speaking on behalf of the Central Committee of the French Section of the Comintern, proposed the 'enlargement' of the Popular Front to form a *Front Français*, which would include liberals and moderates, as well as officers and civil servants who had not supported the Popular Front. He even suggested that his comrades avoid the clenched fist salute, which had become everywhere the symbol of the Popular Front. In other words, as Thorez said, to throw out everything which could be an obstacle to the reconciliation of the French nation.[2]

Thorez was not only a major leader of the Comintern, a member of the ECCI, but he was also considered the 'inventor' of the Popular Front.[3] His position could not easily be taken as a 'deviation'. As a matter of fact, the few documents issued by the Comintern after 1941 all went in the same direction: the class division proposed by Marx had been replaced by the classic division among nations. All this was explicitly expounded by the English edition of the Comintern paper in an article on the significance of May Day in 1942. The editorial explained that when, in the past, the workers demonstrated on May Day for the ideal of international solidarity, when their call to the unity of all toilers rang

across the frontiers, this idea often evoked misunderstanding among other sectors of the population. But in 1942, everything was different, because in that year May Day was a day to rally all people, uniting all honest men who cherished freedom, and when 'the magnificence of the common task must relegate to the background all petty egoistic motives'.[4]

The following year, two events took place which served to strengthen this new class-collaboration mood of Communists, to strengthen also their *Union Sacrée* rhetoric: the dissolution of the Comintern in May, and the Conference of Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt in November.

When the Communist International was finally dissolved in 1943, its 'last will' clung to that idea which was completely opposed to everything Marx had said ninety-five years before. Whilst the *Communist Manifesto* finished with the slogan calling the proletariat of all countries to unite, the dissolution document of the Third International stated that at this moment the World War had

> placed a deep dividing line between those countries which fell under the Hitlerite tyranny and those freedom-loving peoples who have united in a powerful anti-Hitlerite coalition.
>
> In the countries of the Hitlerite *bloc* the fundamental task of the working class, the toilers, and all honest people consists in giving all help for the defeat of this *bloc* . . . In the coalition, the sacred duty of workers consists in aiding by every means the military efforts of the governments of these countries aimed at the speediest defeat of the Hitlerite *bloc* and the assurance of the friendship of nations based on their equality.[5]

As we will see later, the ideas of Browder, then, were little more than a development of the ideas proposed by the dying Comintern. After Teheran, everybody felt that the new language could be used in all circumstances. Thus, in the southern part of the Latin American continent two Communist parties, the Argentinian and Chilean, had joined the International practically at the moment of its creation; they had not been directly influenced by the American Communist Party; the political situation of each country was different. But, in spite of all that, the language of both parties was exactly the same, and was also the same as those 'Northern' parties which were supposedly under the mischievous influence of Earl Browder. Whilst the Chilean Communist Party was working under a democratic government, somehow heir of the Popular Front of Aguirre Cerda, the Argentinian party frontally opposed the government of its country which was accused of belonging to the Hitlerite *bloc*. The Communist Party was thus proposing an insurrection to overthrow the military government of Argentina.

This insurrection was proposed, so to speak, under the banner of Teheran, because the application of the principles of the Churchill–Roosevelt–Stalin agreement (said Vittorio Codovilla in a pamphlet calling for insurrection) will allow peoples of the world to 'develop themselves within democratic regimes and to solve their internal and foreign affairs by means of discussion and to solve all conflicts without appealing to violent forms of social struggle and without wars'.[6] In the same pamphlet, Codovilla considered 'criminal' the stratagems of the Argentine government 'tending to speculate with the national sensitivity of the peoples of Latin America, dragging them into a struggle against "yankee imperialism", just when the American government, under the presidency of Roosevelt, defends freedom and independence for all peoples . . .'. Happily, the stratagems were doomed to fail, in the same way that the campaign of the Argentine government had failed against other governments of Latin America, when it charged them with 'alienating national sovereignty for having aligned themselves in the world front of democracy and for having allowed [the establishment] of air and navy bases for the common defence of the Continent'.[7]

The insurrection Codovilla proposed to launch was for changing the 'Fascist' regime of 'Perón–Farrell–Peluffo' for a government 'of National Union where all progressive forces must participate, from capitalists to workers, from Conservatives to Communists'.[8] Across the Andes, the Chilean Communist Party was speaking the same words. The fact of living under a democratic government, however, allowed this party to go further. Thus, its language was closer to that used by the so-called 'Browderist' parties. Without covering itself with the authority of the Secretary General of the American Communist Party, the Political Committee of the Communist Party of Chile undertook to explain in a document 'why collaboration will be possible among the proletariat and all progressive forces of Capitalism in every country in order to increase production and to raise the standard of living of the working people'. Moreover, the post-war process was anticpated by the Chilean Communist Party in these idyllic terms:

> after the war, and once the independence of every people is assured, instead of an open struggle within every nation for discharging the consequences of war over a given class or social stratum . . . the reconstruction of economic life will be done upon the basis of collaboration and the common effort of the whole population and with the external aid of the economically strongest countries.
>
> In the colonial, semi-colonial and dependent countries – this is the case of Latin American countries – it will be carried out not by policies of increased

colonization and dependence, but by policies of collaboration and aid tending to develop the national economy and full national independence.

There is, of course, a price to pay for entering such a paradise: 'To attain such an objective it is necessary, instead of intensifying the struggle of the proletariat and the working masses of the population against the bourgeoisie, the landowners and foreign enterprises in every country, to initiate a policy of understanding with all the progressive forces developing industry, agriculture . . .' etc. All this will be realized not by the forces included within a Popular Front, but by a broadly-based government with the particpation of all, 'from the capitalists to the workers, that is, from Conservatives to Communists'.[9]

Moreover, the Chilean Communists seemed eager to show that they respected the rules of politeness. Therefore, they wanted to keep informed of their actions the diplomatic representatives of the 'great ally' of the Soviet Union (and also theirs). Thus, when they planned to start a campaign for augmenting their press, the Communist leader Ricardo Fonseca Aguayo went to the United States Embassy to inform the Ambassador officially.[10]

The theoretical propositions of Browder

All that indicates that it is at least incorrect to speak of the influence of Earl Browder's theories misleading their comrades toward a class-collaboration policy. They were already practising this before the advent of the Secretary General of the United States Communist Party. It is true that, as has already been seen, this section was considered by the Comintern as a 'teacher' for some Latin American parties, but it was due less to its real strength than to being a party in a developed country; thus, it took precedence over parties such as those of Cuba or Chile, which were far bigger than the Communist Party of the United States, and more important in their respective countries. The promotion of Earl Browder, Secretary General of that party, to the rank of the leading Marxist in the English-speaking world[11] was accepted in the Americas more because of the origin of the promotion (Georgii Dimitrov and, supposedly the Soviet leadership) than because of any real theoretical achievement of Browder himself. He certainly could not compare in importance with the Peruvian, José Carlos Mariátegui. And his most brilliant contribution in the doctrinal realm, which took his name, was diametrically opposed to Marxist thought.

Browder displayed his ideas in some books which were indeed mostly collections of speeches and articles.[12] In summary, their more important

aspects were the characterization of United States capitalism and the political attitude of the United States (and the American Marxists) towards the 'two-party system'. Closely related to these points was the relinquishing of the idea of the historical necessity of the existence of a Communist Party in the United States.

Before analysing each of these aspects, at least two important although apparently contradictory elements are worth emphasizing, in order to understand the real importance and pertinence of Browderism in the whole theory of the Communist International and furthermore, of Marxism. The first is that Earl Browder justified his theoretical propositions as being a consequence of the new world situation provoked by World War II and, in particular, as a result of the Teheran Conferences in which Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin worked out the terms of their alliance after the end of hostilities. In other words, Browder was performing the same kind of political and theoretical operation that Lenin did with reference to World War I. That is, a kind of 'revision' of Marxism. On the other hand, Browderism was not proposed openly as an example to be followed by other countries and Communist Parties, not even in the Latin American continent; it was something typical of the United States of America.

Typical aspects of American capitalism

Browder's point of departure was that American capitalism was 'the most *advanced* in the world, but not the most *mature*'.[13] The author wanted to make clear that he was making the latter qualification in a psychological sense as he believed that United States capitalism acted perhaps maturely, but without having developed equally mature philosophical underpinnings: 'it does not exhibit the full evolution of inherent tendencies of development, it retains some of the characteristics of a young capitalism, and lags in self-understanding and self-consciousness'.[14]

The best proof of such immature mentality was found by Browder in the almost religious fanaticism of United States capitalists toward what he himself calls 'the slogan of free enterprise'. While European and even Canadian capitalists were, with regard to this formula, more thoughtful and realistic, those of the United States clung to free enterprise 'as tightly as a savage to his fetish'. Browder was actually referring to the most retrograde fringe of American society, those living in the so-called Bible Belt, staunch upholders of the American credo of 'the flag, motherhood and apple pie', an attitude often ridiculed by east coast

liberals. For those people, according to Browder, 'free enterprise has the same sacred character as home and mother'.[15]

But on the other hand, this type of capitalism produces monopoly capitalism. 'The cold fact of the matter' said Browder, 'is this: "free enterprise" today in America means in practice the freedom of capital to concentrate and centralize itself in ever larger units, in the form of trusts, combines, and cartels, which constitute the highest development of monopoly.' This characteristic of American capitalism would be accentuated after the war, as 'not less than 70 per cent of the nation's tremendous war production is in the hands of the hundred largest corporations, and about half is produced by the ten leading giants'. Moreover, this 'tremendous stride forward in the concentration of the national economy will not and cannot be undone', because 'Regulation and limitation of monopoly capital, in a society in which it plays a dominant role, are not simple and easy matters. If big capital unites its forces against the rest of society, and fights for unrestricted domination, then it is extremely doubtful whether it can be regulated successfully'.[16]

The chapter of the book in which Browder expounds these arguments is entitled 'Characteristics of American Capitalism'. The title suggests a profound analysis of the subject, coming as it did from someone Dimitrov hailed as such an important thinker. Nevertheless, Browder's study of American capitalism stops here: (a) American capitalism lacks maturity; (b) American capitalism is and will be monopoly capitalism. That is basically the whole extent of Browder's analysis. In two books concerning the same questions, Browder said the same things, with practically the same words. It is clear that he had no intention of making any theoretical contribution to the subject, but rather wanted to arrive quickly at a practical, political conclusion. Browder proposed a somewhat psychological solution to the first problem. If American capitalism clung to the slogan of 'free enterprise' with a feeling akin to religious fanaticism, the Communists would have to behave in the same way they behaved concerning religious creeds because:

> The problem is somewhat similar to that of religious freedom and tolerance, which demand a respectful attitude toward any and all religious beliefs and the persons who hold them . . . therefore, we declare in advance our understanding that the democratic-progressive camp to which we adhere will adopt the defense of 'free enterprise', that we understand this term as a synonym for capitalism as it exists in our country, and that we will not oppose any counter-slogan.[17]

For the second question, Browder's answer was dictated by the same concern for not damaging relations with the fringe of 'big business' which could be won for democracy and progress. Because, as he said in another book, 'monopoly capital' is not 'a reactionary mass'. Indeed, not only did workers, farmers and the middle classes support the Teheran agreements but among the big bourgeois there were potential allies of the democratic-progressive front. Therefore, concluded Browder:

> We must be prepared to give the hand of cooperation and fellowship to everyone who fights for the realization of this coalition. If J. P. Morgan supports this coalition and goes down the line for it, I as a Communist am prepared to clasp his hand and join with him to realize it. Class divisions or political groupings have no significance now except as they reflect one side or the other side of this issue.[18]

Browder is quite clear: 'class divisions' have no significance now. This is perhaps the most extreme position ever expressed by a 'revisionist' of Marxism.[19]

American Marxists and the 'two-party system'

If there is no particular theoretical elaboration of issues, it is due to the fact that Browder wanted to put them up for discussion not as a somewhat academic debate, but in the realm of practical politics. It was a political agreement, that among the Allies at Teheran, which had so changed the history of mankind that, contrary to what Marx stated, the class struggle would no longer be the 'motor of history'. It was not something implicit, but clearly explicit in the previously quoted statement of Browder. But he did not stop there. For Browder, Teheran was not an agreement doomed to die after the victory over Nazism. Thus, Browder himself underlined his proposal for a post-war policy in the following terms: *'Our post-war plan is national unity for the realization of the perspectives laid down in Teheran'*.[20]

However, there was a big obstacle to overcome before this 'national unity' policy could commence. It was the fact that 'among all the differences that tend to break up the unity of the progressive-democratic majority camp, the most irreconcilable is that between the perspective of America moving over to a Socialist system, and the perspective that America will continue its present system without shifting to a fundamentally new base'.[21]

This statement of Browder could be taken as an acknowledgement that, notwithstanding the political circumstances, the old class division

proposed by Marx still played a role, at least in political terms. The opposition foreseen by Browder was, of course, almost exclusively theoretical. It had practically no real political expression in American society, because: 'It is an obvious fact that there is not an existing or potential majority now that can be united in a programme of action based upon the socialist perspective for our country. Even if we lump together all conflicting concepts of socialism, their adherents constitute a small minority'.[22]

The adherents of Socialism were a small minority yet nevertheless the opposition to any kind of socialism, and even to the mildest policy of state ownership or intervention in the economic realm was so strong that it bore no relation to the actual strength of the Socialists in the United States. This was not simply due to some kind of paranoia, but also and perhaps over all to a political attitude that has traditionally reaped political benefits in the United States: the 'spectre' of Communism which provoked the 'Big Red Scare' in the 1920s and which would sustain MacCarthyism in the 1950s (neither of which had much to do with the real strength of Communists). At this moment, the spectre had a real base: the government of the United States was officially an ally of the Soviet Union, was officially an ally, therefore, of Communism. It was not easy for the 'professional' anti-Communists, to counter the patriotic feelings of a people at war, and attacks against an ally could be denounced by propaganda as a kind of betrayal. The enemies of Socialism chose then the bias of appealing to the old terror of 'Reds'. The influence of such a tendency was so real and so strong that Browder himself thought that 'the democratic-progressive camp in the 1944 elections [for president] could not win the country if it sponsored even a mild program of government ownership of the banks, railroads, mines, public utilities and so on . . .'.[23] Clearer still, it was 'impossible to win the 1944 elections against a united capitalist class'.[24]

This situation was linked in the United States to a particular question: the American conception of a political party. The tradition, says Browder, which dominates most American minds, recognizes as a party 'only that particular combination of the opposition which is an immediate alternative to take power'.[25] All lesser political groups are included within the 'two major' parties. They are, actually, coalitions of several groups that in most countries would be different or separate parties. In 1912 and in 1924, both Theodore Roosevelt and Robert La Follette attempted to break the pattern of the two-party system and failed. The general view, that this system provided adequate channels for democratic rights was largely shared by the working class: 'How else'

says Browder, somewhat astonished, 'are we to understand the fact that in 1940, *not one single organization, labor or otherwise, raised a protest against the high-handed driving of the Communist Party off the ballot* by terror, intimidation and prison sentences?'[26] It is here, and not elsewhere, that one must look to understand the lack of audience encountered by the Marxists in American society: 'It is around the concept of "Party" rather than that of "Communist" that there exists today in America the most practical obstruction to our cooperative relationships with other democratic groups'.[27]

Browder's conclusion was fairly obvious. If 'free enterprise' cannot be countered by anyone and much less by Communists; if attacking 'big monopoly' is either to throw Capitalists as 'one reactionary mass' into the arms of Fascism or to be doomed to face defeat for the democratic-progressive camp; if, moreover, the idea of an independent party not included in one of the two traditional American parties is rejected plainly by the American people and its working class, what to do with a Communist Party? For Browder, this was not a rhetorical question: he proposed, successfully, that the 1944 Convention of the Communist Party of the United States change its name to 'something like "American Communist Political Association"'.[28]

That proved to be the end of the Communist Party of the United States, which never recovered the position it had held in the 1930s, with its great influence among some writers and artists and with the condition of 'tutor' to its Caribbean comrades. It could be said that this dissolution of the Communist Party was a logical consequence of the dissolution of the Comintern itself, because if the Comintern was a single world party and not a federation, dissolving the whole had to mean dissolving the parts. It also caused a crisis among several Latin American parties which attempted to follow Browder's thinking, to say nothing of the havoc wreaked on philosophical discussions over the feasibility of a Communist Party in underdeveloped countries. If the Communist Party of the most advanced country in the world, with the strongest working class, failed, where did that leave the Communist Parties of other less developed countries?

Reaction to Browderism

These words and actions described above formed the *corpus* of a harsh debate among Communists in the aftermath of World War II. It was punctuated with the usual insults, expulsions, dethronements and splits within several Communist parties.[29] The discussion was obscured by

the somewhat esoteric jargon of Communists which contributed so strongly to their isolation. The class-collaboration policy so unjustly attributed to the sinful Browderism had the political consequences and the practical results already mentioned. But perhaps of equal interest is the kind of reaction it encountered, beyond the Communists themselves and beyond the immediate political consequences, particularly the kind of reaction these Latin American Communist policies provoked within the government of the United States. How did capitalist America receive this new alliance proposed for its hinterland by the traditional enemies of capitalism? It is also interesting to see how the so-called National Union policy conditioned the Communist Parties to accept without protesting the jettisoning of their national sections and above all, the liquidation of their world party, the Comintern.

Browder, and even less Browderism, had little importance in the United States, except within the tiny minority of Communists, 'fellow-travellers' and perhaps what Browder himself called the 'small minority' of partisans of different kinds of Socialism. In Latin America, in general, the governments tended to give to the new tactics of Communists a response less related to their words than to the real importance of their parties in the respective countries. The Communists themselves, however, were interested not only in their alliance with those governments but also in gaining the approval of the most important ally of the Soviet Union: the United States.

The case of Cuba constitutes perhaps the best base to study such reactions, not only because of the particular relations between Cuba and the United States, but because of the relations between the Cuban Communists and the American Communist Party.[30] Moreover, being as it was the most important Communist Party in the Caribbean area, the Cuban Party was considered by its comrades as a guide, a tutor.

In addition to this, during most of the months between the entry of the United States (and Cuba) into the war and the dissolution of the International, the American Ambassador, who traditionally played an almost official role of pro-consul in La Habana, was Spruille Braden. More than a professional diplomat, he was a politician and a brilliant personality who found it difficult to hide his talents and who was also an easy target for anti-American propaganda, because of his habit of directly mixing in the internal affairs of the countries where he acted as Ambassador.[31]

However, the analysis made by the American diplomats of the Cuban situation was not overly obscured by political prejudices. They were aware of the fact that Batista was using the Communists at least as much

as the Communists were using Batista. Thus, at the end of 1942, the Chargé d'Affaires, Albert Nufer, stated that not only was Batista getting political benefits in playing the Communists off against his Auténtico[32] enemies in labour, Congress and the University 'and even in patriotic demonstrations', but that he was 'probably influenced in their favor by a complex resulting from the hardship of his youth which makes him antagonistic toward the wealthy classes and sympathetic to the laborers. This complex was at one time stimulated by his being either snubbed or patronized by many socially prominent Cubans.' Nufer concluded with this astute analysis of the Cuban Communists:

> Although the membership of the Communist Party is relatively small (it polled about 100,000 votes in the 1940 elections), this figure is not indicative of its growing strength and prestige. The party leaders are capable, energetic men and include some of the best political brains of the country. Such Communist figures as Marinello, titular head of the party, Blas Roca, Lázaro Peña, and García Aguero, who now have Batista's ear, are all able and inspiring leaders, excellent orators . . . Strict discipline among its members has enabled the party to steal the show in any public rally, in contrast to the poor attendance by members of the other loosely-organized political groups. Much of the strength of the Communists is derived not only from their party discipline . . . but also because they have not drawn the color line as in the case of other political groups. A large part of the present Communist leadership is composed of negroes and mulattoes. The result is that the Communists are continually raising the racial issue.[33]

The sudden tactical reversal of the Communists after 1941 was received with the usual feeling of disbelief. Reporting on a public mass meeting held under Communist auspices in July of that year, the embassy people noted that it was the first occasion on which a leader of the Communist Party (Lázaro Peña) publicly advocated aid to the democracies, in this case Great Britain. But they seemed more interested in remarking that 'In organizing this demonstration, the leaders of the Cuban Communist Party used their usual technique to try to make it appear that Cuban labor solidly supports the Communist cause', and concluded: 'It was evident . . . that the great majority of the participants were obliged to take part by union discipline and were primarily interested in the economic gain which might derive through the Cuban Workers Confederation'.[34]

The Cuban Communists (as their Chilean comrades) did not miss an opportunity to present their new loyalties. They sent invitations to attend their rallies to the diplomatic representatives 'of Great Britain, the United States and other nations resisting Nazi aggression'. They

were accepted by the British but received by the Americans coldly as 'typical of the sort of support which the local Communist Party has been according to the democracies since the entry of Russia into the war'.[35]

After the arrival of Braden as Ambassador in mid-1942, when the USSR and the United States were full allies, this attitude of the United States towards the Cuban Communists did not change. On the contrary, it seemed to become harsher. Braden not only forbade American citizens to buy the bonds that the Communists had issued for financing their campaigns,[36] but he also refused to attend any meeting sponsored by the Anti-Fascist League which was a front organization of Communists. He convinced the diplomatic representatives of Great Britain and China to do the same, and received moreover the warm support of Jorge Mañach, Minister of State.[37]

This could be considered, however, as normal diplomatic behaviour: Braden also attempted to 'obtain the cooperation' even of the Soviet Ambassador in his move, arguing that the League used 'blackmail methods' for collecting funds.[38] It is more interesting, then to see how the best gauge of the sincerity of Communists as allies – the adopting of Browder's ideas, changing of the name of their party and the moderation of their slogans and programmes, adapting them to the National Union policies – was received.

Concerning the change of name, Braden was openly distrustful from the start. He thought that this change was 'more largely due to decisions taken in Russia rather than to local political considerations'.[39] He concluded his comment referring to his confidential information that the Cuban Communist Party had conserved a hidden Leninist organization parallel to the legal apparatus, what he called 'a secret group within the Communist Party organization which follows the habitual pattern adopted by Communist parties in countries outlawing its activities', a group led by 'Fabio Grobart, who is the person the Embassy believes to be the real director of Communist activities in Cuba'.[40] Moreover, he stated that he had serious reason to think that Cuba was somehow the key point in Communist operations 'not only for the Caribbean area but also for Spain'.[41]

But even if he so strongly distrusted the Communists, Braden was not overcome by that feeling. Thus, when the Socialist Popular Party issued its manifesto 'Sobre la defensa de la economía nacional', which was the economic programme of Communists containing their new 'Browderist' line, Braden expressed the opinion that:

> Through its program, the Partido Socialista Popular is attempting to give concrete form to present though still uncoordinated nationalist aspirations

directed toward the reorganization of the life of Cuba on an economically self-contained and politically independent basis. The initiative taken by the Partido Socialista Popular in formulating a definite program is in sharp contrast with the apathy shown in this respect by other political parties. The comparatively restrained nature of this program; the fact that many of its most important principles or practical measures have been followed or adopted during the past 25 years by countries not under Communist or Socialist control; and finally the emphasis placed on the defense of national interest, may appeal to nationalistically minded Cuban conservatives despite Communist sponsorship.[42]

In Colombia, the Communist Party had changed its name at the same time as the Cuban Party. The Colombian went farther than their comrades, because they adopted a name that previously they considered somewhat of an insult: Socialist Democratic Party. The United States Department of State was fully aware that the new party was not even a front organization, but the Communist Party itself,[43] that it had 'merely changed its name to that of Socialist-Democratic Party, as in the United States the name of the Communist Party was changed to that of Communist Educational [sic] Association'.[44] In spite of this, the American diplomats saw the Colombian Communists so engaged in their policies of 'National Union' and the forming of a 'Bourgeois Front', that when the Comintern was dissolved, the American Chargé d'Affaires in Bogotá thought it 'perfectly possible that the Colombian Communists will find themselves unable to withdraw from the Bourgeois Front, and will eventually be absorbed by it'.[45]

'The [Third] International is dead': no tears, no flowers

Indeed, not only the Colombian Communists faced the perspective of merging with, or of being swallowed by, a bourgeois National Front. Their comrades all over the hemisphere seemed eager to demonstrate that they were disposed to do that, and were not being dragged kicking and screaming by circumstances, but did it on their own account. That is why it can be said that the dissolution of the Third International was not only received gladly by the Latin American sections, but taken by some of them as an open invitation to follow the example, by dissolving their parties; as an invitation to become Browderists. The expression of these feelings was known to the American Department of State immediately after the announcement of the dissolution of the Comintern. It ordered the American Embassies all over the hemisphere to gather the reactions provoked by the decision, particularly among Communists and 'fellow-travellers'.

The Latin American Communists evidently learned about the decision in the same way everyone else did – by reading the press. It provoked roughly two kinds of reaction: the first was to consider it, as it obviously was, a gauge of goodwill given by the Soviet Union to its allies. The second kind of reaction was far more interesting because it seemed to indicate that the dissolution had been expected for a relatively long time and, what was also evident, that after its Seventh Congress the existence of the Comintern was a mere formality. Practically every Communist leader whose opinion was requested, answered that it did not imply a change in their policies as they elaborated their policies independently and without waiting for the opinion of Moscow.

These were expected answers. What was somewhat astonishing was the statement, made at the same time by leaders of different parties far distant from each other, that they had given up their affiliation with the Comintern several years before. An alleged leader of the Ecuadorian Party, the French-born Mériguet, claimed that 'The International has not meddled in the affairs of local Communist parties even before 1935 . . .'.[46] Perhaps this could be taken as a general statement not easily believable, but not that of Rodolfo Ghioldi, that important leader of the Argentine Party who had been a member of the ECCI. He declared to the Buenos Aires newspaper *Crítica*, some four days after learning of the dissolution, that 'insofar as Argentine Communists are concerned, the dissolution of the International has no practical application since the Communist Party of Argentina gave up its affiliation with that organization some years ago'.[47] This cannot be ascertained with any degree of confidence. As far as can be verified, between 1935 and 1943, very few decisions concerning particular Communist parties had been taken by the Comintern,[48] and none of them concerned the Argentinians. So, if they disaffiliated themselves, it was never acted upon by the ECCI as the similar action of the Communist Party of the United States was.

A leader of the Colombian Party, Gilberto Vieira, stated that the 'news of the dissolution of the Third International was in fact a little old since the Third International had for practical purposes terminated its existence as the directive center of the world Communist movement following the Seventh Congress . . .' And, in what was a somewhat exaggerated statement, he added that 'the Communist International has never been anything but a symbol for the Communist Party in Colombia which had never had any connection of any kind with Moscow'.[49]

The Cubans also issued the same comment: since 1939, that is, after the merging of Revolutionary Union with the Communist Party they

professed to have 'never belonged to the Communist International'.[50] Again, there is no known record of the decision. A Venezuelan leader, Salvador de la Plaza, claimed that it was a foregone decision, for 'Dimitroff foresaw this dissolution some time ago, and our genial [sic] Stalin has taken the step at the culminating psychological moment'.[51]

In general, it could be said that when the Latin American Communists claimed that they had cut their links with Moscow either as a decision taken on their own or as an administrative measure recognized by the Comintern, they were almost surely not telling the truth. But they were scarcely exaggerating: the dissolution of the Comintern gave a legal *imprimatur* to a process which had the character of a *fait accompli*, in the same way as, some months later, Browderism gave a prestigious name to a policy they were already putting into practice, as Molière's Monsieur Jourdain wrote in prose *sans le savoir*.

Conclusions

Well! I've often seen a cat without a grin, thought Alice, but a grin without a cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in all my life!

CARROLL

In the plan for fostering world revolution proposed by the Third International from its foundation in 1919, Latin America occupied the last place. Thus, the Comintern was founded to play the role of high command of a socialist revolution which would spread from Russia to Germany and to the rest of Europe, later the world, in a very short time. Such a revolution would never arrive in Latin America other than as a result of its victory either in Europe or the United States. In truth, the Comintern never witnessed a Leninist revolution in the western hemisphere. But it also never witnessed the triumph of such a revolution elsewhere. Its whole scheme of world revolution revealed itself as a misconception.

Despite their projections, the revolution did not come. It failed in Germany, it failed in Europe. The Comintern never succeeded in provoking a significant revolutionary movement in the United States, nor even in developing there an important Communist Party. The Comintern conceived the revolutionary movement of Latin America as a support for the forthcoming Socialist revolution in the United States. Ironically, its section in that country never even became strong enough to be able to offer real support to the revolutionary movements that eventually broke out in Latin America. Not only were the big sections of the Comintern in the area (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba) always more important either in strength or in political influence than the United States section, but even some of the 'minor' parties (such as the Ecuadorian, which entered the government in the forties, or the Salvadorian, which launched a bloody insurrection in the 1930s) proved more successful or more audacious in their approach to power than their northern counterpart.

That does not mean that the Latin American Communists succeeded where their comrades failed. The history of the Latin American sections, as is true of the whole Communist International, is the history of a failure. It is the history of the vain attempt to achieve a rapid world revolution to impose 'the proletarian dictatorship and the Soviet power'. It is also the history of the failure of the high command to lead a successful Red Army from its headquarters in Moscow.

The Third Communist International was conceived by its creators in military terms. The statutes proclaimed that it was the aim of the organization 'to fight by all available means, including armed struggle, for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie'. The question of taking power was thus the primary consideration; all others, either theoretical or ethical, were relegated to a secondary plane. As was the case for Machiavelli, for Lenin and his comrades the first problem to resolve, the big question, was *how* to take power from the hands of their enemies, not *why*. Thus they created a very centralized organization, vertically integrated and disciplined, in which internal democracy was subordinate to the dictates of centralized authority. As the Soviet was its most important section and as the triumph of a Soviet world state was the ultimate aim of the Comintern, this organization copied the internal structure of the Bolshevik Party. Thus, its sections had the same character of self-elected oligarchy that existed in the Soviet Union before and after what has been called 'the triumph of Stalin over the Party'.

From its point of origin, the revolution was to have spread also to the colonial countries, following the theoretical development of such a process, that is, the alternative 'periods' of wars and revolutions, peace and stabilization, in which the Comintern divided its own history. But the Comintern soon confronted the historical contradiction that presided over its foundation and which was, as its ex-leader M. N. Roy said, that of trying 'to live simultaneously in two periods of history — pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary'. The Russians lived the post-revolutionary period, and had founded a state which, as did every other state, placed its national interests above all other considerations. The colonial world lived in a pre-revolutionary period which at times posited circumstances that conflicted with the diplomatic interests and convenience of the Soviet Union as a state. In the end, when such contradictions arose, the final decision always favoured the Soviet Union and the guiding party of the International, the Soviet Section, the Bolshevik Party. In general, that meant that the Comintern took a defensive line (i.e. defence of the Soviet Union) instead of an offensive line (fostering colonial revolutions).

This innate contradiction between the needs of the Soviet state and the nominal goals of the Comintern existed before the Latin American sections came into being. It presided over the creation of the central offices at Moscow which dealt with those sections, offices whose creation (as was typical in the International) preceded the meeting held by some of those sections to study the possibility of a common policy, and even preceded the foundation of some of them. The Comintern did not allow the Latin American sections to hold meetings until after they had met in Moscow, together with their comrades from elsewhere, at the Sixth World Congress or perhaps a year before, during the celebration of the ten years of the October Revolution. Before and after the Sixth Congress, the Comintern closely guided the Latin American sections, by means of directives from its central headquarters and also by means of its envoys, the infamous 'agents from Moscow' who, allegedly loaded with 'Moscow gold' were the habitual targets of anti-Communist propaganda and mythology. The only intercommunication of those parties tolerated by the Comintern was that of 'teachers' (Argentina, United States, Cuba) and 'pupils' (Brazil, Venezuela).

Nevertheless, the Latin American sections of the Comintern formed themselves almost spontaneously, not only before the 'order' came from Moscow, but some even before any other parties outside Russia and Germany. Thus, the Argentinian Party was founded in 1918 and the Mexican Party in 1919. When, in 1928, the Comintern announced *urbi et orbi* that it had 'discovered America', America had already discovered the Comintern and formed and developed sections in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Mexico, Cuba, Ecuador and Colombia, even though some of these 'parties' either existed only on paper or were a tiny handful of militants.

Typically, the Comintern proposed a revolution in Latin America and organized the armies to fight for it before making any attempt to understand in what kind of societies the Latin Americans lived and therefore, what kind of revolution they needed. In spite of some attempts to include it within a larger definition, the Comintern tended to place Latin America as a whole in the 'semi-colonial' category, whose dominant class was that of big landed proprietors allied to imperialism. This imperialism was mainly Yankee, but for some time, the Comintern hesitated in choosing between Yankee and British imperialism, basing its own policy on what proved to be a major miscalculation: the idea of a war between Great Britain and the United States of America.

In fact, the Comintern tended to put aside quickly this kind of theoretical discussion in order to arrive at the only subject which truly

interested it: the question of *when* the revolution would explode. Then, only then, would the answers come to the other essential questions: *what* kind of revolution, *who* will take power, and *how*.

As has already been seen, for the Comintern the answer to the question of *when*, was, concerning Latin America, frankly pessimistic. Concerning the question of *what*, the Comintern thought that the revolution Latin America needed was of the democratic-bourgeois type. This was the name Leninists preferred instead of 'national-peasant' or even 'agrarian-anti-imperialist' which were more adapted to the facts. But the Comintern never succeeded in forming a revolutionary peasant movement, and, during most of its history, showed little interest in the questions of political liberties which, 'bourgeois' or not, are essential in any democratic revolution.

The question of *who* will take power and *how* to do it, closely related, had nevertheless different answers during two different periods in the history of the Comintern. During the sectarian so-called 'third period' there was only one answer: the Communist Party. After 1935, with the advances of the National Union tactics, when the Latin American sections of the Comintern had to face the problem of how to approach power, the party itself lost its importance. Thus, in the insurrection of November 1935 in Brazil, the party disappeared behind the *caudillo*, Luis Carlos Prestes, who launched a classic Iberian *pronunciamiento*. In the forties, some Communist Parties followed a tactic of class collaboration that in the end flowed into the so-called 'Browderism', in which the party became so unimportant that some of them changed even their name and applauded, if not followed, the decision of the Communist Party of the United States to dissolve itself.

Nevertheless, if the failure of the Latin American sections was the same as that of their fellow sections all over the world, the Comintern did succeed in having an influence in some countries that went far beyond the real importance of the respective Communist Parties. Paradoxically (because the Comintern did not want to be a propaganda association but a practical tool for organizing and leading the revolution), its main influence in Latin America has been in the theoretical realm. Thus, questions related to the definition of Latin American societies, such as, if those countries were 'semi-colonies' or if they exhibited another kind of 'dependence' have been at the centre of theoretical and political debates for more than fifty years. Thus, also, the questions related to the 'democratic-bourgeois' character of the Latin American revolution have their doctrinal origin in the discussions over policy kept up within the Comintern.

Before and after World War II, the Communists succeeded in obtaining a degree of political influence in some Latin American countries that their comrades never had in many European ones. When twenty years after the dissolution of the Communist International, the Cuban Revolution proclaimed itself Marxist–Leninist, it did so using the theoretical framework proposed by the Comintern, as did, to a certain extent, the Unidad Popular in Chile. When, in the late 1970s, the Sandinista Revolution triumphed in Nicaragua, some of its leaders and almost all its enemies defined it as a revolution whose theoretical basis had its origin in the Comintern: true or false, the same thing had been said of the rebellion of Sandino himself forty years before.

Neither the Comintern as a whole nor its sections in Latin America were able to lead a victorious revolution. But even after the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, the Latin American revolutionary movements tended very often to turn to the theoretical propositions of the Comintern to analyse their problems of development. Having suffered severe setbacks everywhere during its twenty-four years of existence, in Latin America at least, the Comintern has thus posthumously experienced a kind of 'victory in defeat'.

This paradox could be attributed to the inevitable ironies of history. The Comintern, although it saw its mission as one of spearheading the world revolution, of manning the barricades, would make its real contribution in Latin America in diffusing, studying and debating Marxist theory rather than applying Leninist practices. But that was not the ultimate aim of the Comintern. Its members were less interested in spreading Marxism as a school of thought than in seizing power to extend the Soviet state and the proletarian dictatorship. They were not interested in creating a church, but rather in gathering together the faithful all over the world in order to hasten the coming of the kingdom in their lifetime.

In those circumstances, perhaps Clio is less ironical than faithful to herself. As the Latin American Leninists were destined by their world leaders to make their own revolution only after the Europeans and the Asians, they were, at the same time, obliged to give more importance to the church–the party – than to the coming of the kingdom– world revolution. They had an intellectual tradition that prepared them for this. The 'importers' of Communism in Latin America were mainly intellectuals, and Latin American laymen were already used to practising a faith which in fact facilitated their conversion to a new one that had, in spite of its irreconcilable enmity, many points of coincidence with the old. Perhaps what attracted many Latin American revolution-

aries to the propositions of the Comintern was that they were not unknown propositions: internationalism is not a foreign concept for people formed under Catholicism, that is, universalism. Fidelity to a foreign centre, Moscow, was an experience they had previously had with Rome. Leninism even allowed some of them to change their passionate anti-Anglo-Protestantism, that is, anti-Yankeeism, into a modern anti-Imperialism, and also to change their traditional and oligarchic distrust of democracy, which Leninism made more palatable with the moral justification of the defence of the poorest – proletarian dictatorship. Through the bias of Leninism, they were able to return to the lessons of two old masters, Machiavelli and Ignacio de Loyola.

However, a church is not revolutionary. It has a tendency, on the contrary, to become, sooner rather than later, conservative. This is perhaps the explanation of the fact that, even when interested in the theoretical propositions of the Communist International, so many revolutionaries distrusted the Communist Parties. It is not just that in any case the faith would be more acceptable than its institutional – its human – organization. If the party wanted to be judged, as Lenin himself wanted, 'on grounds of expediency' it was normal that the party should be distrusted when it showed an inability to reach its objectives with the same celerity it demanded of others. Such distrust was manifest even during the existence of the Comintern, when the Communists themselves showed little interest in conserving their parties as Leninist or Bolshevik ones, preferring at times to follow the lead of a prestigious military *condottiero* such as Prestes, or to dissolve the parties in a class-collaboration policy.

After the dissolution of the Communist International, some of the most radical processes such as the Cuban or the Sandinista Revolutions were achieved not only by non-Communist outsiders, but even against the will of the Communist Party. It could be said that, in the end, this has been the Comintern's 'defeat in victory'. But this is not really a paradox. If the revolutionaries so distrusted this revolutionary party, it is due to the fact that they thought it not only had ceased to be revolutionary, but also that it had ceased to be a political party. It had ceased to be revolutionary because it had relinquished the idea of world revolution. It had also ceased to be a party, because it had lost the *ressort* of all parties: the will to power.

For Earl Browder was right; his logic was undeniable and very clear. If there was no intention of promoting world revolution, there was no need of a World Communist Party; if the International decided on self-dissolution, the national sections had to do the same.

This was done, in spite of appearances, not only in America, but everywhere. In most countries, Communists conserved the name of their party, the internal structure, the old anthems and the red flag. Some of them (the Chinese, the Vietnamese, the Yugoslavian) became successful national-revolutionary parties; others (the French, the Italian) became reformist, social democratic types of organizations; others (the Communist Party of the United States, some Latin American parties) became little sects or groups of friends of the Soviet Union. But they were no longer Communist parties, for they had lost what gave them their *differentia specifica*: the aim of world revolution.

Nowhere was this process clearer than in Latin America. It was a normal *ricorso*, for if the Comintern never believed seriously in the possibility of a Leninist revolution in Latin America, the Latin American Communists were in turn the first to accept that the idea of world revolution had been cast 'into the dustbins of History' and they were ready, even before Earl Browder, to throw away the tool crafted for fostering that revolution.

Appendix: *Dramatis personæ*

MIKHAIL BORODIN

Born Gruzenberg to a pious Jewish family in Russia, he became a member of the 'Bund' (the Jewish Socialist Party) but later joined the Bolshevik Party. He was one of the first envoys of the Comintern outside Russia. He was sent by Angelica Babalanova, the first president of the Communist International, to the United States in order to smuggle some jewels for the aid of an economic delegation from Soviet Russia which had remained in the United States short of funds. He went to Mexico, where he contacted some radical American refugees as well as the Indian, M. N. Roy. Together, they founded the Mexican Section of the Comintern, which they believed was 'the first Communist Party outside Russia'. Borodin returned to Moscow and in the twenties was sent to China to help the Communists during the period of their alliance with the Kuomintang, and witnessed the bloody reversal of Chiang Kai-shek against his former allies. Borodin was portrayed during this period, by André Malraux in his famous novel *La Condition Humaine*. He died in the late fifties.

VITTORIO (or VICTORIO) CODOVILLA

The most important *apparatchik* of the Comintern in Latin America. Born in Italy, he went to Argentina as an immigrant in his late teens, and never lost his Italian accent in speaking Spanish. He was appointed to lead the South American Secretariat of the Comintern after 1926. Three years later, he left Argentina for eleven years, to work directly with the ECCI, in Moscow and in Spain during the Civil War. He returned to Argentina after World War II, to become the Secretary General of the Party for many years. He died in Moscow in the 1960s.

CARLOS CONTRERAS LABARCA

Secretary General of the Communist Party of Chile. He went to the Seventh World Congress in 1935. His party was the first in applying successfully the Popular Front tactic in Latin America: it eventually entered the government in 1946. Without having the direct influence of Earl Browder, the Chilean Party repeated almost *ad pedem litterae* the theses of Browder on class collaboration during World War II. Contreras died in the late forties.

ARTHUR EWERT

Member of the Communist parliamentary group in the German Reichstag in the late twenties, he was an unsuccessful candidate to the ECCI at the Sixth World Congress of 1928. He became a functionary of the Comintern, helping the revolutionary work in Shanghai and also in South America. With a forged passport he entered Brazil as *Harry Berger* in order to help Prestes and the Aliança Nacional Libertadora to launch the insurrection in November 1935. Caught by the police together with his wife Elisa (Machla), he suffered rough treatment in jail, and became insane during a long prison sentence.

JUAN BAUTISTA FUENMAYOR

Secretary General of the Venezuelan Communist Party from 1937 to 1946. He spent long years in prison under the Gómez dictatorship in the 1930s. He led his party to become one of the most deeply engaged in Browderism in Latin America. He attended a conference of Communist Parties in 1939 in New York. He was expelled from the party in 1950, after one of its endemic divisions.

RODOLFO GHIOLDI

In 1918, before the founding of the Third International Rodolfo Ghioldi formed the International Socialist Party of Argentina, which sustained an anti-war policy opposed to that the official Socialist Party. Along with Codovilla, he was a perennial leader of the Argentine PC, albeit more respected by non-Communists. He had strong influence over the Brazilian leader Luis Carlos Prestes, and was sent by the International to help him in the insurrection of 1935. He was caught by the Brazilian police and spent some time in prison. Member of the ECCI, elected at the Sixth and Seventh Congress.

EUGENIO GOMEZ

Founder of the Communist Party of Uruguay and its Secretary General until the late fifties, when he was expelled for refusing de-Stalinization. Member of the South American Secretariat. Author of the 'official' history of the Uruguayan CP until 1951.

MANUEL GOMEZ

American journalist, known also as 'Frank Seaman'. His true name was Charles Phillips. In 1919 he met in Mexico Mikhail Borodin, the Russian emissary from the Comintern. Gómez founded, together with Borodin and Roy, the Communist Party of Mexico, which he represented at the Second World Congress. Returning to Latin America, he spent several years in the area (mostly Mexico), working for the Comintern under the pseudonym of Gómez. In 1929 he was expelled from the CP of the United States.

FABIO GROBART

Born in Poland, he participated in the foundation of the Communist Party of Cuba in 1925 and has been one of its most important leaders from that date. Anti-Communist

propaganda often accused him of being 'the man from Moscow' behind the Cuban leaders of the Communist Party. In 1943,a 'Survey of Communist Activities in Cuba' sent by the FBI to the Assistant Secretary of State, Adolf A. Berle Jr, gave this picture of Grobart: 'FABIO GROBART, also known as FABIO GROVAT and ABRAHAM SINOVICH, at the present time is considered to be the real chief and dictator of the Cuban Communist Party . . . Grobart arrived in Cuba during 1922 or 1923 as a Polish Immigrant, who was supposedly fleeing from persecution by those opposed to Communism. He is reported to hold Cuban citizenship papers under the name of ABRAHAM SINOVICH, which documents were allegedly obtained through fraud . . . Under various names he has been kept under surveillance by the Cuban Police because of his Communist propaganda activities among the Cuban laborers prior to August 12, 1933 . . . Because of his authority and inclination to give orders, he is considered the real chief and dictator of the Cuban Communist Party . . . GROBART's official status is that of Secretary of Organization of the Cuban Communist Party, and he is a member of the Political Bureau . . . It has also been stated that GROBART functions as an agent of the Third International.'

A. GURALSKY

Born in Russia in 1890, his real name was Abraham Heifetz. He belonged to the 'Bund'. In 1919 he joined the Bolshevik Party. He backed Zinoviev but after the latter's disgrace, he was rehabilitated by the Comintern and sent to South America to lead the Bureau of the International in the area, created after the dissolution of the South American Secretariat led by Codovilla and Humbert-Droz. He lived in Brazil, Chile and Argentina in the 1930s, under the *nom de guerre* of 'Juan de Dios'. He returned to Moscow only to be arrested during the Moscow processes of 1935. He died in 1960.

JULES HUMBERT-DROZ

Born in Switzerland, 1891. He opposed World War I and refused to serve in the Swiss army, being imprisoned. He supported the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and became after 1920 an outstanding leader of the Comintern. He travelled all over the world in order to organize the national sections of the Third International. In France he exerted control functions over the Communist Party becoming, as he said himself later, 'the eye of Moscow in Paris'. He was the first director of the Latin Secretariat of the Comintern (France, Italy, Spain and Portugal) and in 1928 he presented a co-report on Latin America at the Sixth World Congress. A year later he went to Latin America as 'Luis' to attend the Buenos Aires Conference of Communist parties. He was disgraced together with Bukharin, but he re-entered the ECCI after having made a self-criticism. In 1943 he was expelled from the Swiss Communist Party, joined the Socialist Party and began some years later to publish his *Memoirs*. He died in 1971.

HERNAN LABORDE

Secretary General of the Communist Party of Mexico, he was expelled from this organization in 1939, supposedly because of his opposition to the German–Soviet Pact. Vittorio Codovilla seems to have been directly implicated in his expulsion.

EDUARDO MACHADO

With his brother Gustavo, he opposed the Gómez dictatorship in Venezuela and chose exile in the 1920s. He lived in Curaçao, then in Mexico and Moscow. He was imprisoned in the United States on charges of subversion. He allegedly studied in the Leninist School of the Comintern in Moscow. He returned to Venezuela in the late 1930s, to become implicated in harsh factional struggles within the Communist Party. He was imprisoned in 1963, at age sixty on charges of subversion and spent, together with his elder brother, five years in prison. He has been periodically expelled from the Communist Party.

GUSTAVO MACHADO

Coming from a wealthy family of Caracas, he began political activities when he was practically a child, becoming at age fourteen one of the youngest political prisoners of the country. Sent later into exile, he went to France where he completed his Law studies and joined the Communist Party. He went to the Brussels Congress of the Anti-Imperialist League and founded in Mexico the Partido Revolucionario Venezolano, a United Front organization, in the mid-1920s. He went to Las Segovias, in order to give Sandino an international solidarity collection made to help his guerrilla warfare against American intervention. In 1929, Machado attempted to provoke a revolution in Venezuela against the Gómez dictatorship, seizing the island of Curaçao to facilitate a landing later in Venezuela where his (and the self-designated 'General' Rafael Simón Urbina's) little army was quickly disbanded. He avoided being caught by the Venezuelan army, returned to exile until 1936, when he was allowed to go back, only to be imprisoned and expelled from the country a year later. He returned again in 1942, became one of the leaders of the Communist Party and adopted an anti-Browderist policy and thus opposed the party line. In 1947 he was the Communist Party's (unsuccessful) candidate for president. Three years later, the military dictatorship caught and expelled him again from the country. He returned in 1958. In 1963, at age sixty-five, he was again imprisoned on charges of subversion, spending five years in gaol. He died in 1983 at age eighty-five.

JOSE CARLOS MARIATEGUI

Born in Mosquegua (Perú) in 1894. Severely ill since his childhood, he was not able to follow regular studies. After the death of his father, he began to work as a journalist, and at the same time began also his literary career, publishing essays, literary criticisms and poems. After 1918, he was attracted by Socialism and formed a Committee for organizing a Socialist Party which never started. He became soon a very prestigious intellectual in his country. Between 1920 and 1923 he lived in Italy, where he attended the foundation of the Italian Communist Party at the Congress of Livorno, as a correspondent for the Peruvian newspaper *El Tiempo*. For some time all the Socialists, Marxists or simple anti-imperialists in Peru worked together or in alliance with the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA), founded in 1924 in Mexico by Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre, but which was not yet a party. Towards 1927, Mariátegui became increasingly polemical with the APRA and closer to Marxism. Nevertheless, he opposed the forming of a Communist Party in Peru: he wanted to form a Socialist Party, even if this one were to be linked in some way with the Comintern. In 1928, he

published his analysis of Peruvian society from a Marxist point of view, *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality*, which immediately became a classic of Marxist literature in the continent. A year later, his political theses, defended by his comrades Julio Portocarrero and Hugo Pesce, were defeated at the Buenos Aires Conference of Communist Parties. Mariategui died in Lima in 1930. Considered the most important Latin American Marxist theoretician in the 1920s, he actually never had a direct connection with the Comintern.

RICARDO A. MARTINEZ

Venezuelan, better known in his country by his familiar nickname, 'Rolito'. He chose exile in the 1920s. He founded unions of Venezuelan workers in the United States, and perhaps also some Communist cells among exiles. In 1929, under the protection of Codovilla, he became an *apparatchik* of the Comintern. He belonged to the South American Bureau led by Guralsky, as well as to the Caribbean Bureau of the International in 1930s. After the dissolution of the Comintern, he returned to Venezuela and entered the Central Committee of the Communist Party, to become the centre of a rough factional struggle. He translated into Spanish some articles of Earl Browder and influenced the Venezuelan party to take this line. He left the party in 1950.

AGUSTIN FARABUNDO MARTI

Born in El Salvador in 1893, sixth of fourteen brothers in a wealthy farming family. Educated in religious schools, he gave up his studies after entering the university. He began a revolutionary career in various countries of Central America and in New York. In 1928, he went to Nicaragua to join the Sandino guerrilla and became his close collaborator. In 1932 he was caught by the Salvadorian police when preparing a Communist insurrection. He was shot along with some thousands of Communists and poor peasants, after the crushing of the revolt.

JULIO ANTONIO MELLA

Leader of the students in La Habana in 1923, two years later he founded the Cuban Communist Party. He was a very active sportsman, as well as a journalist and an orator. He also organized the Cuban section of the Anti-imperialist League of America. In 1926 he was obliged to leave Cuba. He attended the Brussels Congress of the Anti-imperialist League held a year later. He went then to Moscow, and later to Mexico. There, he wrote several articles of propaganda in the Communist organ *El Machete* and campaigned against the Machado dictatorship of Cuba. He was assassinated in Mexico in 1929, allegedly by order of the Cuban government.

RICARDO PAREDES

A medical doctor, he attended the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern as a representative of both the Communist and Socialist Parties of Ecuador. He was very active in the discussions of this Congress, and proposed adding the category of 'dependent' to the 'colonial and semi-colonial countries'. In 1943, a memorandum of the

American Embassy noted that 'he gave up the fight some time ago and withdrew to private practice in the province of Esmeraldas'.

ASTROJILDO PEREIRA

Ex-anarchist, founder of the Brazilian Communist Party. Member of the ECCI. He left the Party for a long time, and re-entered it after making a self-criticism. His archives, very useful for studying the first years of the Brazilian Communist Party, are at the Archivio Storico del Movimento Operaio Brasiliano in Milan.

JOSE PENELON

Secretary General of the Argentine Communist Party and member of the South American Secretariat, as well as of the ECCI, until 1926, when he was replaced by Codovilla. No known political activity after this date.

SALVADOR DE LA PLAZA

Venezuelan. Born to a wealthy family, he was a Communist from his youth. He spent long years in exile and formed, together with Gustavo Machado, the Partido Revolucionario Venezolano among the Venezuelan exiles in Mexico in the 1920s. He belonged also to a committe of the Caribberan Bureau of the Comintern in Colombia in the thirties. He returned to Venezuela in 1936, but was obliged to return to exile a year later. He opposed the Browderist line in the 1940s and participated in all the factional struggles of the Venezuelan CP. Nevertheless, he was always considered more as a theoretician than as an active militant.

LUIS CARLOS PRESTES

A very prestigious Brazilian military officer, one of the chiefs of the 1926 revolution against Bernardes. His comrades baptised him the *Knight of Hope* when he led his army (the *Coluna Prestes*) through Brazil in a Mao Tsetung-like long march *avant la lettre*. Later he went to the Soviet Union, worked there as an engineer, joined the Communist Party and was elected to the ECCI at the Seventh World Congress. He launched an insurrection in his country in 1935, was caught and spent several years in prison. He returned to political activity in the 1940s. Nowadays, he is no longer chief of the Brazilian Communist Party.

EUDOCIO RAVINES

Peruvian, born in 1897. He took part in the Congresses of the Anti-imperialist League. He worked for the Comintern in Spain during the Civil War. He came into conflict there with Codovilla and became his enemy. He went to Moscow, apparently to participate in a meeting of the Latin American Communists previous to the Seventh World Congress. He was sent to Chile to help the Communist Party in building the Popular Front. He broke with the Comintern in 1939, and became a fanatical anti-Communist.

LUIS EMILIO RECABARREN

Chilean, he founded the Partido Socialista Obrero in 1912 and later persuaded his comrades to support the Russian Revolution and to join the Comintern in 1921. He commited suicide in 1924.

BLAS ROCA

In 1943, the 'Survey of Communist Activities in Cuba', written by the FBI, said of Blas Roca: 'was born July 24, 1906, in Manzanillo, Oriente, Cuba. His real name is Francisco Calderio and the name Blas Roca is a pseudonym by which he is generally known. He comes from a very poor mulatto family that did not permit him to complete his primary studies. He became a shoemaker's apprentice and on mastering this craft, opened a shop in Manzanillo. In 1929, the labor leader Justo Tamayo, requested him to organize the shoemaker's union. At the end of the same year he joined the Communist Party, of which Cesar Vilar was Sectretary in Manzanillo. He took an active part in many strikes and was arrested and imprisoned by order of President Machado. In 1933 he was one of the three secretaries of the Communist Party in Cuba and in 1934 he was made Secretary General of the Party. In this latter year he made a trip to the Soviet Union where he took part as Cuban delegate in the Seventh Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow. . . . From this time on, the history of Blas Roca is that of the Communist Party'.

Blas Roca was elected a member of the ECCI at the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern. In the 1940s, he was the most outstanding representative of the Browderist policy in Latin America, changing even the name of the Cuban Communist Party to Partido Socialista Popular in 1944. He remained at the head of the party until it merged with the '26 July' Movement of Fidel Castro, and entered its Central Committee, of which he is still an important leader. He has been defined as a curious mixture of Communist *apparatchik* and classical Cuban politician.

MANABENDRANATH BHATACHARYA ROY

Indian Nationalist (1891–1954) who travelled worldwide during World War I, with the confessed financial help of Germany, in order to counter British rule in India. Together with Borodin and some American radical refugees, he founded the Communist Party of Mexico. He went as a Mexican delegate to the Second World Congress in 1920, and proposed an 'Asio-centrist' view of world revolution, against the 'Euro-centrist' view of the Italian Serrati, winning partly the support of Lenin. Very important in the first four Congresses of the Comintern and in the beginnings of the Chinese Revolution, he left the organization to found a democratic radical party in his country.

G. SINANI

Russian. Between the Sixth and Seventh World Congresses of the Comintern, he was the Director of the Latin American Bureau of the Comintern at Moscow. He published several works on Latin American historical and political subjects in *Inprecorr* and *The Communist International*, as well as a brochure on the rivalry between the United States and Great Britain in South America. He was charged with being a 'traitorous Trotskyist' and fell during the big 'purges' which followed the murder of Sergei Kirov in 1934.

DAVID ALFARO SIQUEIROS

One of the 'Big Three' of the Mexican school of mural painting. A colonel of the Mexican Revolution, he adhered to the Communist Party but, unlike Diego de Rivera (another master of the same painting school), who changed his political leanings from Stalin to Trotsky and vice-versa, Siqueiros was always a hard-core Stalinist. He even attempted to assassinate Trotsky. In the 1960s, he became Secretary General of the Communist Party and spent several years in prison on charges of subversion.

A. STIRNER

Swiss. His real name was Edward Woog. During the first years of the Comintern he was very important as a specialist on Latin America, and represented 'South America' several times as a delegate to Congresses, the ECCI and other meetings of the Comintern. No known activity after the Sixth World Congress.

VITTORIO VIDALI

Italian Communist known also as 'Sorrenti' but above all as 'Carlos Contreras' (not to be confused with the Chilean Carlos Contreras Labarca). Vidali was for several years one of the leaders of the Mexican Communist Party, and went as its delegate to the Sixth World Congress. He fought in the Spanish Civil War, becoming a legendary figure as 'Comandante Carlos'. After the end of the Fascist regime, he returned to Italy, becoming the perennial leader of the Communist Party in the City of Trieste. He died in 1983.

Commentary on sources

The archives of the Communist International remain closed to foreign investigators, not only to non-Communists but, it has to be assumed, also to Communists. There is not one 'official' history of a single Communist Party which makes reference to documents contained in those archives. This is not the only problem concerning primary sources. The revolutionary character of the organization makes it difficult to locate even the published documents, for their publication was very often illegal or semi-legal. In any case, they were not the kind of papers to keep in accessible archives.

The first available sources are the protocols and briefings of the World Congresses and the meetings of the ECCI, which after the Fifth Congress played, to all intents and purposes, the same role as the Congresses became less frequent. For the first four World Congresses, the most authoritative versions are the Russian and German protocols, but they are published also in French and English in diverse popular editions, as well as in the scholarly work of Pierre Broué and the French Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, now in process of publication. Moreover, after 1921, *International Press Correspondence* (*Inprecorr*) began publishing the full report of the discussions held in the governing bodies of the Comintern. Concerning Latin America, it seems that there is not a single speech or resolution included in the full text of the minutes that has not been reproduced in its entirety in *Inprecorr*. Given these circumstances, *Inprecorr*, the weekly (and often more frequent) voice of the Comintern, has to be considered the most important serial primary source. It was published originally in Russian, German, French and English. The German edition was printed sometimes in Hamburg or Berlin, sometimes in Vienna (and of course, presumably also in Moscow). The French version (as well as the Spanish version after 1928) was printed in Paris. The English edition was printed in Hamburg, Vienna and London. Apparently, there is not a big

difference between the English and French editions of this periodical. Although, besides the Russian, the most authoritative version was the German one, it should be noted that it ended in 1933 after the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor. The French version ended in 1939 and thus the only complete edition is the English one. In 1938, this last changed its name to *World News and Views*. But, undoubtedly to underline that even though re-baptized, it was the same paper, it continued the numbering of *Inprecorr* both in terms of volumes and their pagination as well (*Inprecorr* began with page 1 in the first edition of every year, and pagination was continuous throughout the year). The Spanish edition, published as mentioned in Paris, seems to have had a life as short as it was irregular.

From 1922 to the dissolution of the Comintern, *Inprecorr* published more than 400 texts including articles, speeches and resolutions of the Comintern, its Front organization and the individual Communist parties on Latin America. Those writings have had a curious fate. They dealt with Latin American matters, most of them were originally written in Spanish and came surely from Latin America. However, it is doubtful if they were known in those countries by anyone but their authors and the very tiny fringe of leaders who could read the official languages of the International. Thus, more than spreading Comintern teachings in Latin America, they may have served to give to the the International Communist movement a particular image of Latin America.

The theoretical organ of the Executive Committee, *The Communist International*, was also published in the four official languages of the Comintern and for some (undetermined) time also in Spanish. It appears to have been less interested in Latin America than *Inprecorr*. The English version published less than two dozen articles on the area, which works out at about only one a year. Moreover, they can hardly be considered as 'theoretical' texts, being mainly descriptions. The Spanish edition, *La Internacional Comunista*, was printed in Paris and started in 1939. The name of the publisher (Ed. Europa-America) suggests that the review was published both for the Latin American and Spanish public. During the war, some numbers of this edition were printed in Mexico.

The most important published source for the history of the Comintern in Latin America in the 1920s is the review *La Correspondencia Sudamericana* printed in Buenos Aires. It was published in two periods: from 15 June 1926 to 15 September 1927; and from 1 August 1928 to 1 May 1930

As for practically any study on Latin American history, the United

States of America National Archives are a precious source of documentation. The file on the 'Communist International' contains not only very useful information about the activities of the Comintern's sections in Latin America, but also about the reactions it provoked both from Latin American governments and that of the United States. The files on Brazil in the 1930s contain very detailed documentation concerning the 1935 uprising. The files on Cuba and Colombia in the 1940s, allow the researcher to follow the United States reactions to the class-collaboration policy of the different Communist parties supposedly under the influence of Browderism.

Most of the sources used in this work are located in Europe and the United States but somewhat dispersed. Therefore, it would also be convenient to say something about their location. In London, all the official documents published by the Executive Committee of the Communist International and its British Section are in the British Library, but the collection of *International Press Correspondence* is not complete. The British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics, has a bigger collection on microfilm, but the whole year 1933 is missing. The most complete collection of this newspaper is in the London Marx Memorial Library. It is not easy to collate the English edition of the theoretical voice of the Comintern, *The Communist International*, which seemed to have had several different editions published at the same time and very often bound together in the libraries. The explanation is perhaps that the English edition was printed occasionally in the United States, although there was also an American edition. There are two numbers of the review *La Correspondencia Sudamericana* at the Internationl Institute for Social History in Amsterdam and in the Public Library of New York; but the only complete collection so far known is in the Archivio Storico del Movimiento Operario Brasiliano, Archives of Astrojildo Pereira. The director of the ASMOB was told at Moscow that there were two numbers missing in the collection of the archives of the Institute of Marxism–Leninism. In the Istituto Giangiacomo Feltrinelli at Milan, there is a complete French collection of a *La Correspondance Internationale* and of *L'Internationale Communiste* until 1939.

The only number available of *La Correspondencia Internacional* (that is, the Spanish edition of *Inprecorr*) before 1939 is at the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale (Paris–Nanterre). It is dated 14 August 1931 and indicates that it was in its fourth year: the publication started then in 1928. The collection does not exist at the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris, which might be due to the fact that the whole edition (printed

in France at the same address as the French edition) was sent to Spain (and perhaps to Latin America) and for this reason avoided or ignored the obligation of legal deposit. In 1939, a new edition (which is held in the Bibliothèque Nationale) began to be printed in France, but lasted only few months because the editor, the French Communist Party, was prohibited after the German–Soviet Pact. At the International Institute for Social History at Amsterdam, there are some issues of pro-Comintern periodicals, mainly Mexican, useful for the study of the first days of the Comintern, particularly of its Mexican section.

Among the collections of documents, the most accurate and useful are the three volumes of Jane Degras, *The Communist International*. In Italian, there is *L'Internazionale Comunista. Storia Documentaria* of Aldo Agosti, of which only the first volume (1919–23) had been published by 1981. In French, there are the works of Pierre Broué already mentioned, *Premier Congrès de l'Internationale Communiste* and *Du Premier au Deuxième Congrès de l'Internationale Communiste*, as well as the *Archives de Jules Humbert-Droz*, which are being published by his widow since his death in 1971. In Spanish, there are the volumes with the full report of the Sixth World Congress, *VI Congreso de la Internacional Comunista*, published in Mexico. In Portuguese, there is the book edited by Paulo Sergio Pinheiro and M. Hall, *A classe operaria no Brazil 1889–1930. Documentos*, published in Sao Paulo. Useful when treating particular subjects, are Stephen Clissold's *Soviet Relations with Latin America*, of which only a part deals with the Comintern; chapters 2 to 8 of the book by Hélène Carrère d'Encausse and Stuart Schram, *Le Marxisme et l'Asie*; as well as volumes 2 and 3 of Richard Gregor's (ed.), *Resolutions and Decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*.

Among the bibliographies, the most complete and accurate is Thomas Hammond's *Soviet Foreign Relations and World Communism*, which in 1240 pages and with the collaboration of several specialists, goes through 7000 books in 30 languages, noting those most useful for every particular subject. Less complete is the work of Witold Sworakowski, *The Communist International and its Front Organizations*. The monograph of Giuliano Procacci, 'L'Internazionale Comunista dal I al VI Congreso' in the *Annali* dell'Istituto G. Feltrinelli, 1958, is a review of all the publications on the subject kept in that institution, but is somewhat out-of-date. The most useful for the study of the relations of the Comintern with the non-European peoples is the bibliographical essay of Enrica Colloti-Pischel and Chiara Robertazzi, *L'Internationale Communiste et les Problèmes Coloniaux*. Their research was carried out only in the Istituto Feltrinelli, but when compared with other archives in

Europe and America (see Sworakowski, *The Communist International*), it can be said that the Institute has an excellent collection. The study stops in 1935, with the last Congress of the Comintern.

With reference to the secondary works, besides Kermit McKenzie's *Comintern and World Revolution*, and the already mentioned collection of Degras (who gives, by means of the notes presenting each document, an excellent introduction to the history of the Comintern), there are two classical books: Frank Borkenau's *World Communism. A History of the Communist International*, a book originally written before the beginning of World War II by an old bureaucrat of the Comintern; and Julius Braunthal's *History of the International 1914–1943*, which studies the Comintern as a part of the international Socialist movement. H. Seton-Watson, in *The Pattern of Communist Revolution* and Günter Nollau in *International Communism and World Revolution*, dealt with both institutional and ideological aspects of the problem. The book written by Branko Lazitch in collaboration with Milorad M. Drachkovitch, *Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern*, is, in spite of some almost inevitable mistakes (which arise from dealing with an underground movement) the only work done so far in this field. The book written in 1957 by Demetrio Boersner on *The Bolsheviks and the National and Colonial Question (1917–1928)* is still current. Translated into Italian, there is the very interesting book of Milos Hajek, *Storia dell'Internazionale Comunista (1921–1935)*. Among the historical works written with a somewhat polemical viewpoint *against* the Comintern, the newest and longest, that of Pierre Frank, *Histoire de l'Internationale Communiste*, is the Trotskyist version of that history. The brochure of M. N. Roy, *The Communist International*, is less an historical approach than a political essay full of acute observations and opinions. It is always necessary to take into consideration the brilliant, sharp, if often emotional essay of Fernando Claudín, *La crisis del Movimiento Comunista*.

There are some 'official' histories of the Third International. For the fifteenth anniversary of the organization, the Agit-Prop Department of the ECCI issued an *Outline History of the Comintern*, presented in the form, usual in the Comintern, of 'Theses'. Five years later, Otto Kuusinen wrote a short article on the subject, 'Twenty Years of the Communist International', which is an authoritative synthesis of the Stalinist point of view. But so far, the most interesting work along these lines is the collective work published in the Soviet Union in 1971 under the direction of A. I. Sobolev, *Outline History of the Communist International*. On page 3, it notes that 'This outline history of the Comintern has been prepared by the Institute of Marxism–Leninism under the CC

of the CPSU with the cooperation of the following leaders of the Communist International and people who had worked in its offices and press organs: Walter Ulbritch, Dolores Ibarruri, Jacques Duclos, Tim Buck, Khaled Bagdache, Victorio Codovilla, Georges Cogniot, Inkeri Lehtinen, Boris Ponomarev, Palme Dutt, Dezö Nemés, Friedl Fürnberg, Emilio Sereni, Ruben Abramov, and Andrew Rothstein.' The interest of the work derives from two novel aspects: this was the first attempt by Communist historians to write a book on the Comintern which was complete (that is, without avoiding the period 1939–43) and documented (basing the work on some primary sources and showing where they are located). On the other hand, the book clearly shows the problems previously indicated with reference to the archives of the Comintern. More than 100 footnotes refer to the files of the 'Central Party Archives-Institute of Marxism–Leninism', but 38 notes simply do so in order to quote public documents, which could be found in *Inprecorr* or elsewhere. The remaining citations come mainly from documents relating to non-Communist organizations (the Second and the so-called 'Second-and-half' Internationals, Amsterdam Labour Unions, Kuomintang), or the heterodox Communists (Chinese, Yugoslavians) who are perfectly free (if they have not done so already) to publish such documents. Other citations come from documents which have been captured by the bourgeois police (such as those referring to the German party), or decisions, circulars or telegrams sent more or less openly to the national sections. Of course, there are also the authoritative quotations of Lenin. Very few citations come from the discussions in the ECCI, the Secretariat or other bodies of the Comintern which are not otherwise available.

Finally, there are some 'official' histories of Latin American parties: Colombia, Peru, Chile. But as a general rule, they either avoid or quickly pass over the subject of their relations with the Comintern.

Notes

1 The Communist International in history

1 'The Communist International recognizes that in order to hasten victory, the Workingmen's Association which is fighting to annihilate capitalism and create Communism must have a strongly centralized organization. The Communist International must, in fact and in deed, be a single Communist Party of the entire world. The parties working in the various countries are but its separate sections'. See Jane Degras, *The Communist International 1919–1943. Documents* (London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd, 1971), vol. 1, p. 164. Hereinafter, this book will be quoted as *TCI-Documents*.

2 In order to avoid the overuse of quotation marks, unless otherwise stated, in the following pages, terms such as 'bourgeois' or 'bourgeoisie', 'proletariat', 'class' and 'class struggle', 'democracy' and 'dictatorship', 'capitalism', 'feudalism', 'colonies', 'imperialism', 'socialism', 'communism' and some others, will be used in the particular sense given to those expressions by the Third International itself.

3 'Komintern' was the short name for *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, the official name of the organization in Russian, as well as for Kommunistischen Internationale, the German name or even, changing the first 'K' for a 'C', for the English name. In France as in Italy there was some reluctance to spell it in that way, unless polemically, as was the case in Spain as well. In Latin America, when using the shortened name, Communists used the name 'Comintern' but preceded it with the masculine definite article 'el' instead of the feminine definite article 'la', as would have been normal since the word 'International' is feminine in Spanish. The use of 'el' Comintern perhaps betrayed an *arrière-pensée*: they were thinking of the Executive Committee, 'el Comité Ejecutivo'.

4 *L'Internationale Communiste*, September 1920, p. 2636; and *International Press Correspondence*, 3 March 1922, p. 124. Hereinafter, this newspaper will be quoted as *Inprecorr*.

5 It is not difficult to counter this assertion by giving, in almost every country of Latin America, one or more examples of the 'origins' of Socialist thought, or of its earlier arrival, prior to the Third International. But in general it could be said that, putting aside the case of Chile and to a lesser extent, Argentina and Cuba, such cases were the result either of an intellectual restlessness (of individuals or élites) or of the propaganda of the European socialists or Anarchists among the newly arrived immigrants. In the International Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis of Amsterdam, an extraordinary collection of periodicals can be found that reveal the lively activity of Anarcho-communists and Anarcho-sindicalists before the Russian Revolution: a

large number of them were written either in Italian or in a Spanish too 'Italianised' not to have been written by a recently arrived immigrant.

6 In 1940, that is, sixteen years after its foundation, the APRA still felt the necessity of pointing out not only its general differences with both Socialism and Communism, but even with tactical issues of the Comintern, stating that the APRA should not be confused with some kind of Popular Front. Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre, 'La verdad del aprismo' (first printed in Lima, 'Indoamérica, Incahuasi', 1940), *Obras completas* (Lima, Editorial Juan Mejía Baca, 1977), vol. 1, p. 286. Concerning Venezuela, the early correspondence of Betancourt and other founders of 'Acción Democrática' prior to 1936 is a permanent polemic about subjects proposed by the Comintern, as can be seen in the third section ('Correspondencia') of the collection of documents 'mysteriously' (i.e. by the police) published in 1936 as *La verdad de las actividades comunistas en Venezuela*, otherwise *Libro Rojo* (Caracas, José Agustín Catala, 1972).

7 In 1939, the 'Tesis política del Partido Democrático Nacional' (the underground organization led by Romulo Betancourt in Venezuela) gave of its country this Comintern-like definition: 'Venezuela es un país semicolonial y semi-feudal . . .' Naudy Súarez Figueroa (ed.), *Programas políticos venezolanos de la primera mitad del siglo XX* (Caracas, Universidad Católica 'Andrés Bello', 1972), vol. 1, p. 244.

8 The book of Robert J. Alexander, *Communism in Latin America* (New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1957), contains a large amount of personal interviews, mainly with Communist leaders in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Cuba, Venezuela, Guatemala and México. Almost all the interviews are dated between 1946 and 1948. See 'Footnotes', pp. 411–27.

9 Aleksandre Nekrich, Soviet historian exiled in 1965 and now teaching at Harvard, states nevertheless that the Soviet archivists do not destroy documents 'for two reasons, peculiar to the Soviet system. The first is that the bureaucratic system has a tendency to make always more than one copy of each of its documents: you are not, then, sure of having all copies in hand; secondly, that Soviet power has not known interruptions, and so, who governs is sure of controlling the archives'. *La Repubblica*, Rome, April 17, 1981, p. 18.

10 Degras, *TCI-Documents*, vol. 1, p. 169.

11 The following Communist parties were founded illegally or were illegal for a long time: Brazil, Cuba, Peru, Guatemala, El Salvador, Paraguay, Venezuela. Even in Argentina, the Communist Party has suffered several periods of underground activity.

12 The situation has somewhat changed, without however going to the opposite extreme. Thus, the Archivio Storico del Movimento Operaio Brasiliano at Milan has opened to investigators the archives of Astrojildo Pereira, founder and for some time General Secretary of the Communist Party of Brazil.

13 This manner of writing history did not end with the death of the Soviet dictator and the beginning of the so-called de-Stalinization period; at the end of the 1960s, the Director of the Institut 'Maurice Thorez' (Paris), wrote a book on the Comintern. Throughout 158 pages and 24 years, the name of Stalin does not appear once. Georges Cogniot, *L'Internationale Communiste* (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1969).

14 The classical book of this kind is that of Eudocio Ravines, *The Yenan Way* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951).

15 Aldo Agosti, 'La storiografia sulla terza internazionale'. *Studi Storici*, Rivista trimestrali dell'Istituto Gramsci (Rome, January–March 1977), p. 140.

16 The Communist parties of Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Cuba, Costa Rica

and Mexico were founded by students, journalists, lawyers and artists. Even in the South, where they could claim to have come partly from the working class, Rodolfo Ghioldi of Argentina was a teacher, Recabarren of Chile a publicist, Brandao and Astrojildo Pereira of Brazil journalists, not to mention Prestes, a military officer.

17 The history of the Comintern has been undertaken with this 'ideological' approach in two of the most scholarly works so far published: Kermit MacKenzie, *Comintern and World Revolution* (London and New York, Columbia University Press, 1964) and Ernesto Ragionieri, 'Il Programma dell'internazionale comunista' in *Studi Storici* October–December, 1972, pp. 671–725 and January–March 1973, pp. 114–39.

18 E. J. Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973), p. 4.

19 'Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International', Second World Congress, *Minutes of the Proceedings* (London, New Park Publications, 1977), vol. 2, p. 257.

20 Degras, *TCI-Documents*, vol. 1, pp. 113–14.

21 Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1975, p. 7.

22 Second World Congress, *Minutes*, vol. 2, p. 145.

23 The first article of the statutes approved at the Second World Congress is somewhat less restrictive saying that its goal was: 'the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of an international Soviet republic which will completely abolish all classes and realize socialism, the first stage of communist society'. Degras, *TCI-Documents*, vol. 1, p. 164. But the remembrance of the final goals of Communism is also present here at the end of the phrase, again seemingly an afterthought.

24 Zinoviev insisted that the vote on the Statutes should be made 'as unanimously as possible and show the whole world that we are not a loose propaganda association'. *Minutes*, vol. 2, p. 143.

25 Ernesto Ragionieri, 'Il programma', p. 674.

26 E. H. Carr dedicates a whole chapter to show the links among the NEP in Russia, the fiasco of the so-called 'action of March' in Germany in 1921, and this new preoccupation of the Comintern, which led to the 'United Front' policies. *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1923* (London, Penguin Books, 1977), vol. 3, pp. 381–421.

27 Thus, Lenin said that his rejection of the use of individual terrorism by Anarchists was made 'only on grounds of expediency'. *Left-wing*, p. 19.

28 David Winjkoop, a Dutch delegate to the Second Congress, complained that the Executive Committee to be formed was but an extended Russian Executive, but lest this be misunderstood, stated that he was not opposed on principle to such an ECCI 'because the Russian Party is the most revolutionary and the strongest' but 'one should then say so'. *Minutes*, vol. 2, p. 131.

29 At the Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, held in August 1917, 171 out of 267 delegates answered a questionnaire on their social origins: 'Since 94 of those who replied had received higher or secondary education, and only 72 were listed as workers or soldiers by occupation, it may fairly be estimated that over half the delegates, as revealed by the sample, were intellectuals.' Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (London, Methuen and Co., 1978), p. 173.

30 The key to Lenin's organization of his party was that 'all distinctions as *between workers and intellectuals*, not to speak of distinctions of trade and profession, *must be effaced. What is to be done?* (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1978), p. 109 (underlined by Lenin).

31 For Lenin, 'doctrinalism' was not only a defect of the right-wingers but also of the left-wingers in the Party, and both of them had to be crushed. *Left-wing*, p. 87.

32 Pierre Frank, *Histoire de l'Internationale Communiste* (Montreuil, Editions La Breche, 1979), vol. 1, p. 385.

33 Which was the case, in May 1938, of the Polish party. The article of the statutes which allowed the ECCI to do that was the 15th. Degras, *TCI-Documents*, vol. 2, p. 468.

34 Actually, this rule concerned the so-called 'small bureau' of the ECCI. Karl Radek wanted the ECCI to be able to co-opt new members freely, arguing that the illegal work made it necessary. Radek was defeated, and it was voted that the ECCI could make such co-optations for the 'small bureau' but only from the elected members of the ECCI. However, exceptions were permissible in special cases. Degras, *TCI-Documents*, vol. 1, p. 273.

35 The financing of the national sections of the Comintern was somehow implicit in its condition of a single party and, at least until the end of the 1920s, it was not concealed that something like half of the Comintern's budget went out from its own treasury to the national sections, mainly in order to finance the launching of a newspaper or a particular campaign. Julius Braunthal, *History of the International 1914–1943* (London, Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd, 1967), p. 320.

36 In the statutes voted at the Second Congress, it was said that 'The chief work of the Executive Committee falls on the party of that country where, by decision of the World Congress, the Executive Committee has its seat [i.e. Russia]. The party of the country in question shall have five representatives with full voting powers . . .' After them, the ten to thirteen most important parties should have one representative each. Degras, *TCI-Documents*, vol. 1, p. 165.

37 Schapiro, *The Communist Party*, p. 403.

38 N. Bukharin, 'The International Situation and the Tasks of the Comintern'. Report of the ECCI to the Sixth World Congress (full report), *Inprecorr*, July 30, 1928, pp. 725–6.

39 Jules Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline. dix ans au service de l'internationale communiste. 1921–1931* (Neuchâtel, Editions de la Baconnière, 1971), p. 306.

40 *Ibid.*

41 'Contrary to the predictions of the social-democratic false prophets and Bukharin who followed them, capitalist stabilization became more and more shaky.' Otto Kuusinen, 'Twenty Years of the Communist International' in L. L. Sharkey, *An Outline History of the Australian Communist Party* (Sydney, Australian Communist Party, 1944), p. 76.

42 See the collection of documents *L'Internationale Communiste et la lutte contre le fascisme et la guerre, 1934–1939* (Moscow, Editions du Progrés, 1980), p. 8 and *passim*.

43 New York, Pathfinder Press, 1974. The first edition was published in 1936.

44 Frank Borkenau, *World Communism. A History of the Communist International* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1971), p. 134.

45 The resolution 'On Party Unity', of which Article 5 forbade 'factionalism' was voted on March 16, 1921, at the Tenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, Richard Gregor (ed.), *Resolutions and Decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1974), vol. 2, pp. 119–21.

46 Borkenau, *World Communism*, p. 419.

47 Braunthal, *History*, p. 263.

48 Pierre Broué (ed.), avec le concours du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique,

Premièer Congrès de l'internationale communiste (Paris, Etudes et Documentations Internationales, 1974), p. 96.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 133.
50 *Ibid.*
51 *Ibid.*, p. 211.
52 *Minutes*, vol. 1, p. 116.
53 *Ibid.*, p. 173.
54 *Ibid.*, p. 111.
55 Fernando Claudín, *La crisis del movimiento comunista* (París, Ruedo Ibérico, 1970), p. 217. There is an English edition: *The Communist Movement. From Comintern to Cominform* (New York and London, Monthly Review Press, 1975), 2 vols).
56 Aldo Agosti, *L'Internazionale Comunista. Storia documentaria* (Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1974), vol. 1, p. 765.
57 *Congress of the Peoples of the East*, Baku, September 1920 (London, New Park Publications, 1977), p. 1.
58 Claudín, *La Crisis*, p. 205.
59 Hélène Carrère d'Encausse and Stuart Schram, *Le Marxisme et l'Asie. 1853–1964* (Paris, Armand Colin, 1965), p. 254.
60 Degras, *TCI-Documents*, vol. 1, p. 380.
61 *Ibid.*, p. 382.
62 *Ibid.*, pp. 398–401.
63 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 159.
64 For the relations between the Chinese defeat of the Comintern and the politics of the 'third period', see Braunthal, *History*, pp. 320–9. See also Demetrio Boersner, *The Bolsheviks and the Colonial Question (1917–1928)* (Geneva, Librairie Droz, 1957), pp. 211–51.
65 Evgene Varga, 'Ways and Obstacles to the World Revolution' in *The Communist International*, n. 18 and 19, n/d (probably January–February 1926), pp. 78–79.
66 Bukharin, *Inprecorr*, July 30, 1928, p. 735.
67 Wang Ming, *The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonial Countries* (London, Modern Books, 1935), pp. 23–9.
68 Enrica Collotti-Pischel and Chiara Robertazzi, *L'Internationale Communiste et les problèmes coloniaux* (París, Mouton Co., 1968), p. 547.
69 In the resolution about the report of Wilhelm Pieck, taken on 1 August 1935, the Congress invited the ECCI to avoid, as a general rule 'to mix up directly with the organizational internal affairs of every Communist Party', *L'Internationale Communiste et la lutte contre le fascisme*, p. 379.

2 Latin America in the Comintern

1 All this was revealed by the Germans Clara Zetkin and Paul Frölich, before the Third Congress of the Communist Party of Germany (Spartakist), *Du Premier au Deuxième Congrès de l'Internationale Communiste* (Paris, Etudes et Documentations Internationales, 1979), pp. 413–22.
2 *Ibid.*, pp. 436–7.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 41. Clara Zetkin opposed the opening of this bureau in Mexico because, she said, 'if it was necessary to build up a particular bureau in America, it had to be located in the centre of the revolutionary movement, the United States'. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

4 *Bulletin of the Provisional Bureau in Amsterdam of the Communist International*, n.d., no. 2, p. 28 (Feltrinelli reprint).
5 *Du premier*, p. 415.
6 In the International Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis of Amsterdam, there are four numbers of the *Boletin Comunista*, Organo del Bureau Latinoamericano de la III Internacional, dated 1920, and one more, this one an extraordinary edition, dated 16 January 1921. Also Barry Carr quotes the Mexican paper *El Soviet*, 16 December 1919, announcing the formation of a 'Bureau Latinoamericano de la 3 International' and publishing a manifesto directed 'to the workers of Latin America'. 'Marxism and Anarchism in the Formation of the Mexican Communist Party, 1910–1919', *HAHR* (*The Hispanic American Historical Review*) 63:2 (May 1983), p. 302.
7 Pierre Broué, 'Introduction', *Du premier*, p. 12.
8 His true name was Edward Woog. See Vilém Kaham, 'A Contribution to the Identification of the Pseudonyms used in the Minutes and Reports of the Communist International', *International Review of Social History*, vol. 33, 1978, p. 183. Hereinafter, this article will be quoted as 'Identification of Pseudonyms'.
9 Antonio Bernardo Canellas, *Relatorio de delegacia à Russia, como representante do Partido Communista do Brazil, acompanhado de uma exposição dos motivos que determinharan a minha demissão da CCE do Partido*. Rio de Janeiro, 1923.
10 *Vième Congrès de l'Internationale Communiste*, Paris, La Correspondance Internationale, 1928, p. 1279. At the same time, an Anglo-American Secretariat dealt with the affairs of the Communist Party of the United States.
11 *L'Internationale Communiste*, Organe du Comité Executif de l'IC, Moscow–Paris, August 1928, p. 1212.
12 Ravines, *The Yenan Way*, pp. 135 and 235.
13 Astrojildo Pereira, 'A formaçao do PCB' in *Ensaios Históricos e Politicos*, Sâo Paulo, Editora Alfa-Omega, 1979, p. 72.
14 Canellas, *Relatorio*, p. 58.
15 'Report on the activities of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (from the period since the Enlarged Executive, March/April 1925–end of January (1926)', p. 181 (Microfilm, British Library).
16 *El movimiento revolucionario Sudamericano*. Versiones de la Primera Conferencia Comunista Latinoamericana. Junio de 1929. Buenos Aires, *La Correspondencia Sudamericana*, n/d [1930], p. 363. Herlinafter, *El Movimiento*.
17 *La Correspondencia Sudamericana*, p. 32.
18 *Ibid.*, 1 August, 1928, pp. 4–5.
19 In a letter written to his wife from Montevideo, on 16 May 1929, Humbert-Droz said: 'We will have some problems with Codovilla. I told him in the coldest way possible the decision of the political secretariat [it seems that Humbert-Droz is speaking here of another secretariat, not the 'Sudamericano', because otherwise, Codovilla would have already known its decisions] of keeping him away from the Montevideo Conference. I thought, because he is a Stalinist, that he would obey that order. But he did not. He says, and I think he is right, that all that shows distrustfulness towards him and that he will be, therefore, obliged to step down from the Secretariat. As he is the only one who works there, one can guess the consequences . . .the work of the Secretariat will fall apart.' *De Lénine à Staline*, pp. 390–92.
20 *La Correspondencia*, 1 August 1928, pp. 4–5.

21 *El trabajador latinoamericano*, revista quincenal de información sindical, junio y julio de 1929, pp. 51–91.
22 The list was published in *La Correspondencia*, 16 August 1929, back cover.
23 *El movimiento*, p. 363.
24 *Libro Rojo*, sección 'Correspondencia'. In his unpublished manuscript 'Stratégie et Tactique de l'Internationale Communiste en Amérique Central (1920–1936)', Rodolfo Cerdas quotes a single number of 'El Comunista', organ of the Caribbean Bureau of the Comintern, No. 11, March 1932, but he does not give any further details as to its location.
25 Martínez said that in the Comintern 'this question was discussed, but its implementation was postponed because of the important mistakes of the Mexican party'. *El movimiento*, p. 365.
26 Interview with Juan Fuenmayor, ex-Secretary General of the Communist Party of Venezuela, 6 June 1977, Caracas.
27 *Ibid.*
28 800.00B/Machado Morales, Gustavo/11–2144, RGN:59. United States of America National Archives (Hereinafter, USANA).
29 *El martillo*, órgano central del Partido Comunista de Venezuela (Sección Venezolana de la Internacional Comunista) (illegal), April 1938, p. 4.
30 *La Correspondencia*, pp. 16–17.
31 *Revista Comunista*. Organo del SSA de la IC. The first number is dated 1 September 1930. The only two numbers available, albeit very difficult to read, are in the Archivio Storico del Movimento Operaio Brasiliano in Milan.
32 *The Yenan Way*, pp. 79–81.
33 In the above quoted letter, he says that 'if Bukharin has been eliminated, then it will be my turn at the Executive . . . I feel that this is my last trip for the Comintern'. *De Lénine à Staline*, p. 391.
34 Ravines, *The Yenan Way*, p. 79.
35 The only document known so far is the brochure *La Lucha por el Leninismo en América Latina* (Buenos Aires, Bureau Sudamericano de la IC, 1932), which is one of the most sectarian documents in the history of the Comintern in Latin America.
36 Narkomindel: abbreviation for Narodnyi Komissariat Inostrannykh Del, the People's Commisariat of Foreign Affairs, also known by its acronym NKID.
37 Teddy J. Uldricks, *Diplomacy and Ideology. The Origins of Soviet Foreign Relations 1917–1930* (London and Beverly Hills, Sage Publications Ltd, 1979), p. 162.
38 See M. N. Roy, 'A mysterious visitor to Mexico' in *Contributions à l'histoire du Comintern* (Génève, Librairie Droz, 1965), pp. 106–10, hereinafter, *Contributions*; and Manuel Gómez, 'From Mexico to Moscow', *Survey*, October 1964, p. 35.
39 'It was neither a *Bolshevik leader* nor a *friend of Lenin* who arrived in Mexico, but a modest militant chosen by Leon Karakhan and Angelica Babalanova because he had spent some years in the United States and spoke English.' Boris Souvarine, 'Michel Borodine en Amérique' in *Contributions*, p. 98. For the 'Bundism' of Borodin see p. 100.
40 Roy not only lent Borodin 500 dollars to send to his wife, but later he sent 10,000 dollars more, in order to relieve the unbearable situation of a Soviet trade commission detained penniless in Washington, and which the 'crown jewels' smuggled and mislaid by Borodin were supposed to help. *Contributions*, pp. 111–12.
41 Victor Alba says that Katayama spent eight or nine months in America, credits him with the 'discovery' of Codovilla, but gives neither sources nor further details.

Esquema histórico del Comunismo en Latinoamerica (Mexico, Ed. Occidentales, 1960), pp. 29–31.

42 *VIième Congrès*, p. 1418; see also Kahan, 'Identification of Pseudonyms', p. 164; and B. Lazitch, *Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern* (Stanford, The Hoover Institution Press, 1973), p. 427.

43 Antonio Avila and Jorge García Montes, *Historia del Partido Comunista de Cuba* (Miami, Fla., Ed. Universal, 1970), p. 58. They say, however, that with respect to the presence of Grobart at the first meeting of the Communist Party of Cuba, 'there was no historical evidence'. On the other hand, the proceedings of that meeting, captured later by the police, shows the presence there, as a delegate from the Comintern, of the Mexican Communist, Enrique Flores Magón. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

44 *The Yenan Way*, p. 164. The other members of the 'brigade', says Ravines, were a Czech, Frederic Glaufbauf, a German ('Manuel Cazón'), a Russian, Kazanov, a Venezuelan, Ricardo Martínez, and an Italian, Marcucci.

45 Elias Laferte, a worker who was founder of the Chilean CP and one of its longlasting permanent leaders, says that Ravines 'came to Chile by 1937, pretending that he was an envoy of the Communist International . . . Soon we realized that all that was entirely false . . . But he did not leave Chile and partly to help him (he was married to a Chilean), as well as for our weakness and lack of functionaries ['cuadros'] we gave him some work in our party's papers.' Elias Laferte, *Vida de un Comunista*, Santiago de Chile, Talleres Gráficos Horizonte, 1961, p. 326. The version of Laferte is hardly believable, because it supposed practically no relations between the Chilean section of the Comintern and the ECCI.

46 José Luis del Roio, the director of the ASMOB in Milan, who has interviewed Prestes several times, told me about Olga Preste's position. See also the defence of Rodolfo Ghioldi before the court in Brazil in *L'Internationale*, April 1938, pp. 635–8.

47 See Branko Lazitch, *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 197. There is nothing in the dossier Kornfeder in the USANA, except this unclear cross-reference: 'Communistic activities of Professor (Theodore) Schroeder believed to be an agent of Bishop (Montgomery) Brown and an American Jew by the name of Joseph Kornfeder, who acted in similar capacity.' June 8, 1932. 800.00B/Kornfeder, Joseph/1. RGN:59, USANA.

48 Manuilsky was the head of the Comintern before Dimitrov.

49 Philippe Roubrieux, *Histoire intérieure du Parti Communiste 1920–1945* (París, Artéme Fayard, 1980), p. 207. Roubrieux writes in this page 'Lozovsky' instead of 'Guralsky', but it seems to be a mistake; see also Souvarine, *Contributions*, p. 100.

50 Roubrieux, *Histoire intérieure*, p. 278. It is worth noting here some mistakes in the testimony of Ravines: (1) Guralsky was not only an 'Old Bolshevik' but also an 'old Bundist'. See Souvarine, *Contributions*, p. 100; (2) Guralsky and Cremet were not the same person: the latter was a young worker of Saint-Nazaire who had been suggested directly by Stalin to form the Central Committee of the French Communist Party together with Thorez, Monmousseau and Sémard (Roubrieux, *Histoire intérieure*, p. 242), but who had to disappear after the scandal of the funds from Moscow; (3) Ravines seems to confuse 'Pierre' (representative perhaps of the Young Communist International, a Russian) with the French Labour militant Austin, who had worked with the Socialist Revolutionary Party of Colombia. (See *El movimiento*, p. 127 and Ravines, *The Yenan Way*, p. 317.)

51 *De Lénine à Staline*, p. 390.

52 Leoncio Basbaum recalls in his memoirs that in 1928, the Brazilian communists received invitations for the Congress of the Comintern and the YCI as well: 'They covered our expenses there and the return tickets, but the ones for going had to be paid by the BCP.' L. Basbaum, *Uma vida em seis tempos (Memorias)* (Sao Paulo, Editora Alfa-Omega, 1976), p. 53.

53 *The Yenan Way*, p. 179. He says that approximately a month before arriving in Chile, the NKVD (Soviet Home Office) gave him 20,000 dollars to distribute in Paris, Spain and Rio de Janeiro.

54 Fuenmayor stated that the IRA sent 100 dollars monthly to the family of Mariano Fortoul, imprisoned in Caracas in the thirties. Interview with Juan Bautista Fuenmayor, 11 June 1977, Caracas.

55 'The Chilean Communist Party 1922–1947' (unpublished).

56 Juan B. Fuenmayor, *Historia de la Venezuela política contemporánea 1899–1969* (Caracas, Talleres Tipográficos de Miguel Angel García e hijos, 1976), vol. 3, pp. 450–1.

57 Colloti-Pischel, *L'Internationale Communiste*, p. 30; Kahan, 'Identification of Pseudonyms', p. 180.

58 Second Congress, *Minutes*, vol. 1, pp. 125–6.

59 *Moscou*. Organe du IIIième Congrès de l'IC, 28 June, 1921, p. 1.

60 *Ibid.*, 21 June, p. 4.

61 *Ibid.*, 12 June, p. 4.

62 *Ibid.*, 17 June, p. 4.

63 *Inprecorr*, 14 December, 1922, p. 941.

64 Antonio B. Canellas, *Relatorio*, passim.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

66 Eugenio Gómez, *Historia*, p. 53.

67 Kahan, 'Identification of Pseudonyms', p. 183.

68 *Ibid.*

69 *Ibid.*, p. 182.

70 A. Pereira, *Ensaios*, p. 75. Nowhere is it said that Pereira was the Brazilian delegate to that Congress, but as he was at Moscow in 1924, it has to be assumed that he was that delegate.

71 *Bulletin de l'exécutif élargi de L'Internationale Communiste*, Moscow, 12 July 1924, p. 4.

72 *VIième Congrés*, p. 2.

73 *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 1654.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 1655.

76 *VIIième Congrés de l'Internationale Communiste*. París, La Correspondance Internationale, 1935–36, pp. 1370–2 and 1705–7. Henceforth, *VIIième Congrés*.

77 *Ibid.*, pp. 1366–7 and 1721.

78 *Ibid.*, pp. 1664–5.

79 *Ibid.*, pp. 1506–7.

80 *Ibid.*, pp. 1767–8. This was the pseudonym of José Antonio Mayobre, who later quit the CP and became Minister of Finance in the 1960s.

81 *Ibid.*, pp. 1761–2 and 1714–15.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 1726. This name is perhaps a bad spelling of Bohorques, who was in fact Carlos Contreras Labarca.

83 *Compte rendu de la Conférence de l'Exécutif Elargi de l'Internationale Communiste* (Paris, Librairie de l'Humanité, 1922), p. 13.

84 *Inprecorr*, 16 June 1922, p. 360.
85 Collotti-Pischel, *L'Internationale*, p. 106.
86 *Ibid.*, p. 155.
87 *Ibid.*, p. 194.
88 *Inprecorr*, 20 December 1926, pp. 1539–40.
89 *Inprecorr*, 15 September 1929, pp. 1094–5 and 15 October 1929, pp. 1269–70.
90 Collotti-Pischel, *L'Internationale*, p. 478.
91 *Ibid.*, p. 415.
92 Frantisek Svatek, 'The Governing Organs of the Communist International: their Growth and Composition, 1919–1943', in *History of Socialism Year Book 1968* (Prague, Ustav Dejim Socialismu, 1969), p. 221.
93 *Ibid.*
94 *Ibid.*, p. 231. Stirner was also 'reporter' (named by the ECCI) on South America, p. 236.
95 *Ibid.*, p. 240.
96 *Ibid.*, p. 242.
97 *Ibid.*
98 *Ibid.*, pp. 245–57 passim.

3 The Comintern in Latin America

1 As a matter of fact, the Communist Party of Venezuela which would hold its first national meeting only in 1937, was nevertheless accepted as a full member of the Comintern at the Seventh Congress of 1935.
2 *La Importancia de la Primera Conferencia Comunista Latinoamericana. Resoluciones adoptadas por la misma* (Buenos Aires, *La Correspondencia Sudamericana*, 1929), p. 24. (Henceforth, *Resoluciones*).
3 Rollie E. Poppino in *International Communism in Latin America* (New York, The Free Press, 1964), p. 54, as well as José Aricó in 'La Terza Internazionale'. *I protagonisti della revoluzione* (Milano, Compagnia Edizioni Internazionale, 1973), p. 282, speak of the presence of the Argentinian International Socialist Party at the First Congress of the Communist International through the Italian Socialist Party, but without giving any source; Robert Paris in an article about the subject in *Movimiento operaio e Socialista*, No. 4, 1969, p. 318, corrects the notice, indicating that this event took place at the Second Congress of 1920. Even so, there is nothing in the minutes of the proceedings to support his claim either. As a matter of fact, in the list of parties repesented at the Buenos Aires Conference, the CP of Argentina is given as having been founded in 1918 and joining the Comintern in 1919, but there is no mention of acceptance. *Resoluciones*, p. 24. Moreover, in an article written four years after the death of Lenin, Rodolfo Ghioldi speaks of the history of the Argentinian Communists *before* the forming of the Comintern, but does not mention the incident, *Inprecorr*, 25 January 1928, pp. 106–7. Unless someone produces some concrete evidence to the contrary, the sources oblige us to say that Argentina was not present or represented by anyone in either the First or the Second World Congress of the Comintern.
4 *Premier Congrès*, passim.
5 For the history of the Argentinian CP, see also Robert J. Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 154–76; Poppino, *International Communism*, pp. 59–61; Jorge Abelardo Ramos, *El Partido Comunista en La Política Argentina* (Buenos Aires, Ed. Coyoacan, 1962), pp. 27–185.

6 See PCB (SBIC), *O proceso de um traidor* (O Caso do ex-comunista A. B. Canellas) (Rio de Janeiro, Typ. Lincoln G. Camara 292, 1924), p. 16.

7 *El Movimiento*, pp. 381–2.

8 At the end of the 1920s, Luis Carlos Prestes, one of the leaders of the revolution against Bernardes, led an army through the Brazilian territory, until its internment in Paraguay, in a kind of 'Long March' before that of Mao Tset-ung in China.

9 For the history of the Communist Party of Brazil, see John W. F. Dulles, *Anarchists and Communists in Brazil, 1900–1935* (Austin and London, University of Texas Press, 1973); Ronald H. Chilcote, *The Brazilian Communist Party: Conflict and Integration 1922–1972* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1974); Astrojildo Pereira, 'A formaçao do PCB' in *Ensaios históricos e políticos* (São Paulo, Editora Alfa-Omega, 1979), pp. 41–161, as well as *Construindo o PCB (1922–1924)* (São Paulo, Livraria Editora Ciencias Humanas, 1980); Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 93–134; Poppino, *International Communism*, pp. 70–78; Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, *A Classe Operaria no Brazil 1889–1930. Documentos* (São Paulo, Editora Alfa-Omega, 1979), pp. 256–320. For an idea of the theoretical opinions of Luis Carlos Prestes at the moment of the insurrection of 1935, see 'Quotations of Luiz Carlos Prestes' (another Maoism *avant la lettre*!) in *Inprecorr*, 4 April 1936, p. 463; a somewhat official albeit literary biography of Prestes is Jorge Amado's *Le Chevalier de l'espérance* (Paris, Editeurs Français Réunis, 1949); a very unsympathetic version of the revolt of 1935 is José Campos de Aragão's *A Intentona Comunista de 1935* (Rio de Janeiro, Biblioteca do Exercito Editora, 1973); for the viewpoint of Communist intellectuals, see Leoncio Basbaum, *Uma vida em seis tempos (Memorias)* (São Paul, Editora Alfa-Omega, 1976); as well as Octavio Brandão, *Combates e batalhas* (São Paulo, Editora Alfa-Omega, 1978).

10 Alexander, *Communism*, p. 177.

11 So far, the most complete history of the Chilean Communist Party is the Ph.D. thesis, University College London, 1978, of A. Barnard, 'The Chilean Communist Party 1922–1947', not yet published. The 'official' history is Hernán Ramírez Necochea, *Origen y formación del partido Comunista de Chile* (Santiago, Ed. Austral, 1967); on the work of the Comintern's agents in Chile during the Popular Front; see Ravines, *The Yenan Way*, pp. 164–86; see also Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 177–210; Poppino, *International Communism*, pp. 67–70; on the relations between Socialist and Communist Parties, see Paul W. Drake, *Socialism and Populism in Chile, 1939–1952* (Urbana–Chicago–London, University of Illinois Press, 1978), pp. 133–241.

12 After being expelled from the Party, Gómez published the 'official' history of the organization until 1951, which is a very interesting document, less for its content than for the circumstances of its writing and publication. Written by a commission when Gómez was still the general secretary, the document praised him as was typical during the years of the so-called 'cult' of Stalin. After de-Stalinization (and the subsequent expulsion of Gómez), the Party dropped the publication of the manuscript. Gómez, who held a copy of it, went ahead and printed it. In the introduction as well as in the footnotes, Gómez explains his expulsion from the Party in the purest Stalin-like paranoid style: it was the fruit of a conspiracy of Trotskyist agents and right-wing opportunists. Eugenio Gómez, *Historia del Partido Comunista del Uruguay* (hasta el año 1951) (Montevideo, Editorial Elite, 1961).

13 Besides the book of Gómez, see also Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 135–48; Poppino, *International Communism*, pp. 65–7; Paris, 'La Terza Internazionale', pp. 322–3.

14 In Jacques Freymond (ed.), *Contributions*, p. 115.

15 'Allen was, by his own admission, an agent of United States Military Intelligence, having been recruited while working in one of the Mexican government's military manufacturing plants by Major R. M. Campbell, the military attaché of the United States Embassy in Mexico City in late 1918'. Barry Carr, 'Marxism and Anarchism in the Formation of the Mexican Communist Party, 1910–1919', *HAHR* (May 1983), p. 294.

16 For Borodin and his work as a Soviet agent, see also Appendix.

17 Robert Paris, in *Movimiento operaio*, p. 323; J. Aricó, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

18 See the interview of 'Manuel Gómez' in *Survey* (Oct. 1964), pp. 33–47: the main interest of Borodin seemed to be the recovery of some jewels that the Soviet government had given him for trading abroad and that he had mislaid in Haiti.

19 Roy, an Indian nationalist and therefore a hard-core enemy of Great Britain, had strong ties with the Germans and did not conceal that he received funds from them. Being anti-American, the Mexican President Carranza was considered as being pro-German. As a result, both men seemed to like each other, and so 'Manuel Gómez' states that 'Roy was highly appreciated by people in the Mexican government; he had some good friends there. It was easy to do that in Mexico if you mingled in certain circles . . .', *ibid.*, p. 36.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

21 Siqueiros was the most active of them politically. He attempted to assassinate Trotsky and, by the sixties, became Secretary General of the Party.

22 The translation was done by Wenceslao Roces, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain who, after Franco died, returned to his country and was elected to the Cortes. For the history of the CP of Mexico, see also Donald H. Herman, *The Comintern in Mexico* (Washington, Public Affairs Press, 1974); O. Rodríguez Araujo and M. Rodríguez Fuentes, *El Partido Comunista Mexicano (en el período de la Internacional Comunista)* (Mexico, Ediciones 'El Caballito', 1973); Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 319–49; and Poppino, *International Communism*, pp. 61–5.

23 Others included: Antonio Guiteras, Rubén Martínez Villena, Ramón Grau San Martín, Raúl Roa, Juan Marinello and Fidel Castro.

24 José Aricó, *op. cit.*, p. 308, recalls an example particularly typical of how far distrustfulness and sectarianism could reach: having been imprisoned, Julio Antonio Mella began a hunger strike but had to override the opposition of his party. Its leaders thought that since hunger and misery were the daily condition of the workers, only an intellectual would take such an individualistic position.

25 In a very interesting study, Alistair Hennessy points out the various and complex reasons for such a collaboration, which cannot be attributed only to the politics of 'class-collaboration' of Communists during the World War and which helped the CP of Cuba to become a force in the country and the working movement. This essay, a chapter of a book on Latin America and the Spanish Civil War (1981) was summarized by the author as 'The first Batistato in Cuba, 1934–1944', a paper presented for discussion in a graduate seminar on Caribbean Societies at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies of the University of London on 29 October 1980.

26 For the history of the Communist Party of Cuba, see also Sergio de Santis, 'Appunti sul Partito Comunista cubano dalla nascita alla rivoluzione castrista (1925–58)' in *Rivista Storica del Socialismo*, May–August 1966, pp. 182–209; Raquel Tibol (ed), *Julio Antonio Mella en 'El machete'* (Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Popular, 1968);

Vittorio Vidali, *Patria o muerte, venceremos* (Milano, Vangelista Editore, 1973, pp. 215–42; Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 80–2; and the extremely hostile book of Antonio Avila and Jorge García Montes, *Historia del Partido Comunista de Cuba* (Miami, Fla., Universal Editions, 1970). Perhaps the most detailed report on the Cuban Communist Party's history, internal structure, leadership and political activities during the Comintern period is given by a seventy-one page 'memorandum setting out information received from a reliable confidential source', sent by the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigations, J. Edgar Hoover to Adolf A. Berle, Jr, Assistant Secretary of State, on June 15, 1943. 'Survey of Communist Activities in Cuba'. 837.00B/405. Confidential File. USANA.

27 Victor Alba, *Esquema histórico del Comunismo en Latinoamérica* (Mexico, Ed. Occidentales, 1960), p. 20.

28 Both parties were, nevertheless, represented at the 1929 Communist meeting of Buenos Aires. Actually, most of the parties which met there were organizations on paper only. On the other hand, with the exception of the CP of Costa Rica, the Central American sections of the Comintern were 'founded' several times, because of repression or inner organizational weakness.

29 800.00B/Communist International/278. USANA.

30 See his speech in *Inprecorr*, October 25, 1928, p. 1369.

31 *El movimiento revolucionario*, p. 29; see also *The Communist International*, May 20, 1935, p. 54: it said that the Paraguayan CP, 'which ceased to function in 1930' had been reorganized by 1933.

32 See Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 148–53; Poppino, *International Communism*, pp. 82–3; for the attitude of the Paraguayan Communists during the Chaco war, see *El Movimiento*, p. 29.

33 For the early years of activity of Bolivian Communists, particularly during the Chaco war, see *El movimiento . . .*, p. 29; see also Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 212–20, and Poppino, *International Communism*, p. 89.

34 See Jorge del Prado, *40 años de lucha* (Lima, Ed. 'unidad', 1968); José Aricó (ed.), *Mariátegui y los orígines del marxismo latinoamericano* (México, Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente, 1978); Ravines *The Yenan Way*, passim; Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 240–4; the theses of Mariátegui on anti-imperialism, in *El movimiento*, pp. 149–52. In spite of its title, the book of Alberto Flores Galindo *La agonía de Maráteguí. La polémica con la Komintern* (Lima, Desco, 1980), concludes that Mariátegui never had a direct relation with the Comintern. His 'polemic' was sustained in Buenos Aires through his envoy 'Zamora' (otherwise Julio Portocarrero), pp. 20–2. A very important study on the Marxism of Mariátegui is the unpublished thesis of Jorge Gaete Avaria, 'Historia de un lenguaje infortunado: Mariátegui y el Marxismo' (Tesis de Maestría en Ciencia Política, Universidad Simón Bolívar, Caracas, 1983), which presents also a very detailed and up-to date bibliography on Mariátegui.

35 *VIième Congrès de l'Internationale Comuniste* (Paris, Le Correspondance Internationale, 1928), p. 1182, and Kermit McKenzie, *Comintern and World Revolution*, p. 80.

36 Alexander, *Communism*, p. 234–42.

37 *VIième Congrès*, p. 1261.

38 Mahecha presented a lively report of the strike to his comrades gathered in Buenos Aires. *El movimiento*, pp. 116–21.

39 The strike of the banana workers was enshrined for all time in Gabriel García Marquez's *Cien años de soledad.*

40 Alexander, *Communism*, p. 245; see also *Treinta años de lucha del partido Comunista de Colombia* (Bogotá, Ed. Los Comuneros, 1960), pp. 5–70.

41 It was the police who in their reports, called the group 'El Pomposo'.

42 *Documentos que hicieron historia* (Caracas, Presidencia de la República, 1962), vol. 1, pp. 166–75.

43 The fact was reported in *Inprecorr*, 21 June 1929, p. 640, as 'the incident at Curaçao' and made no mention of Machado. His action was condemned implicitly by Humbert-Droz when he told his Venezuelan comrades that they had to put aside all dreams of invasion of their country in order to start a revolution from abroad. *El Movimiento*, p. 106.

44 *L'Humanité*, 11 June 1931.

45 *L'Internationale Communiste*, September 1936, pp. 1229–30.

46 For this history of the Communist Party of Venezuela, see Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 253–69, as well as his *The Communist Party of Venezuela* (Stanford, Cal., Hoover Institution Press 1969); Juan Bautista Fuenmayor, *Veinte años de política 1928–1948* (Madrid, Mediterráneo, 1968); *Aportes para la historia del PCV* (Maracaibo, Biblioteca de Documentos Históricos, 1971); Duclos and others, *Antecedentes del revisionismo en Venezuela* (Caracas, Fondo Editorial Salvador de la Plaza, 1971); 'La verdad de las actividades comunistas en Venezuela' [otherwise *Libro Rojo*] (Caracas, s/e, 1936. Reprint 1972).

47 *Resoluciones*, p. 24. The newspaper, *El Mazo*, was announced on the back cover of *La Correspondencia Sudamericana*, 1 December 1929.

48 Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 391–5.

49 At that moment, the relations between Sandino and the communists had become very bad, and in writing this letter, Martí was to a certain extent marking a difference with the attitude of his comrades. Martí spoke there of Sandino as the 'greatest patriot': a few months later, the organ of the Comintern was speaking of the 'betrayal' by Sandino. *Inprecorr*, 24 March 1933, p. 323, and 13 April 1933, p. 376.

50 For the history of the 1932 upheaval, see Thomas P. Anderson, *Matanza. El Salvador Communist Revolt of 1932* (Lincoln, Neb., University of Nebraska Press, 1971); Jorge Arias Gómez, *Farabundo Martí* (Educa, San José de Costa Rica, 1972). A very interesting analysis is in Rodolfo Cerdas: 'Stratégie et tactique de l'Internationale Communiste en Amérique Centrale (1920–1936). Trois cas d'analyse: Nicaragua, Salvador et Costa Rica', Thèse de Doctorat de Troisième Cycle, Faculté de Sciences Humaines–Sorbonne Université René Descartes, Académie de Paris, 1976. An immediate report of the revolt was given in *Current History* (edited by *The New York Times*), March 1932, pp. 843–4; see also Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 367–71.

51 *Inprecorr*, 9 June 1922, p. 348.

52 Alexander, *Communism*, p. 351; the proceedings of the Fifth Congress speak of a party 'of Central America' without further precision, but making it clear that it had not been accepted yet. *Vième Congrès de l'IC*, p. 323.

53 Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 350–64.

54 *Inprecorr*, 31 August 1935, p. 1097; for the history of the CP of Costa Rica, see Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 383–91; Cerdas, 'Stratégie'; and for the activity of Betancourt in Costa Rica, *Libro Rojo*, section 'Correspondencia'.

55 He was the poet Jacques Roumain, author of a novel, *Les Gouverneurs de la rosée*; in the late fifties, another writer, Jacques Stephen Alexis, again tried to found a

Communist Party but was quickly caught and assassinated by the police of Duvalier.

56 *Inprecorr*, 22 December 1927, p. 1636.

57 Alexander, *Communism*, p. 34, gives the following list of participants: Eudocio Ravines, Armando Bazan, Julio Portocarrero from Perú; Ricardo Martínez from Venezuela; Vittorio Codovilla from Argentina; Astrojildo Pereira and Karracik, from Brazil; List Arzubide from Mexico and Julio Antonio Mella from Cuba. Victor Alba gives the same list, adding only another Argentine who supposedly later became the secretary of Guralsky in the South American Bureau. Victor Alba, *Historia del movimiento obrero en América Latina* (Mexico, Limusa Wiley SA, 1964), p. 197. Both authors are quoting Ravines by name. But Ravines did not say that he was in Moscow by this date; what he says is that 'Julio Portocarrero and Armando Bazan [who had been in Moscow at the time, sent by Mariátegui as representatives of the Peruvian unions] told me about the events which had preceded Martínez's rise to his present positions, and which had brought about the tragic death of Julio Antonio Mella, the Cuban Communist leader.' *The Yenan Way*, p. 57. Then, the affair Mella-Martínez if true, happened *before* the arrival of Ravines at Moscow.

58 Julio Antonio Mella went to Moscow shortly after the Brussels Congress of the Anti-Imperialist League (February 1927) and spent no more than one and a half months there. After having returned from the USSR in the third week of June 1927, Mella began to write several articles for *El Machete* on his impressions, which Raquel Tibol reproduces in *Julio Antonio Mella en 'El Machete'*, pp. 77–94; on 3 July, 31 July and 10 August 1927 he was campaigning in Mexico for the defence of Sacco and Vanzetti. *Ibid.*, pp. 146–50. Astrojildo Pereira was not in Moscow either, because, in December 1927, he was in Buenos Aires, charged by the Communist Party of Brazil, as well as his paper *Esquerda*, with contacting Prestes. A. Pereira, *Ensaios*, pp. 127–30. It is unlikely that he would have been able to be in Moscow and Buenos Aires almost on the same days: 1927 was the year of the historic journey of Lindbergh across the Atlantic.

59 The above quoted manifesto published by *Inprecorr* was signed by a representative of the 'Miners' Federation of state of Halisco [sic]' whose name was 'Sisneros'. This could be a mistake, the Spanish name being 'Cisneros'. Alexander changes it to 'Siqueiros'. *Communism*, p. 49.

60 *Resoluciones*, p. 24.

61 Ravines, *The Yenan Way*, p. 56. Ravines does not speak in his book of the Conference of Buenos Aires.

62 *El Movimiento*, pp. 297–301.

63 Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine*, p. 390; Ravines, *The Yenan Way*, pp. 79–80.

64 Gómez made the opening speech, representing the South American Secretariat. *El movimiento*, pp. 7–8.

65 Edmundo Ghitor was presumably Orestes Ghioldi, brother of Rodolfo. See Jorge Abelardo Ramos, *El partido*, p. 69.

66 The Venezuelan Communist exiles were working within the 'Partido Revolucionario Venezolano', which never claimed to be a Communist Party.

67 It was formed in March 1922.

68 Thus, concerning the problem of 'races', the conference was obliged to publish two different conclusions. See *Resoluciones*, pp. 25–30; and Codovilla had to give way before the decision of his Peruvian comrades to launch a 'Socialist Party' in spite of the opinion of the Comintern. *El movimiento*, p. 190.

69 However, it is worth noting that only once, when discussing the anti-imperialist struggle, was Mariátegui quoted by name. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
70 *VIième Congrès*, p. 1419.
71 *Resoluciones*, pp. 29–30. As a matter of fact, the conclusions of Humbert-Droz tried to be somewhat less rigid, but at the end he finished by referring to the Soviet example as the solution to the 'national' problem.
72 Jorge Abelardo Ramos, *El partido*, p. 94.
73 See p. 458. It has to be said that this article is extremely confusing: it speaks of the Buenos Aires Conference of 1929 as having taken place at Montevideo.
74 *Outline History of the Communist International*, p. 368. Sobolev is, however, obviously quoting the article of *The Communist International*.
75 See in particular the already cited official histories of the Communist Parties of Peru, Chile and Colombia.
76 Eugenio Gómez, *Historia*, pp. 84–100.
77 Ravines, *The Yenan Way*, pp. 145–46.
78 *The Communist International*, p. 458.
79 *Ibid.*, p. 459.
80 *Ibid.*, p. 457.
81 *Ibid.*, p. 459.
82 *Ibid.*, p. 460.
83 *Ibid.*, p. 459.
84 Ravines, *The Yenan Way*, p. 146.
85 'Strengthen Pan-American Democracy'. *The Communist*, July 1939, vol. 18, no. 7, pp. 621–3.
86 Ravines, *The Yenan Way*, pp. 281–2.
87 *Ibid.*, p. 621.
88 *Ibid.*, p. 622.
89 *Ibid.*, p. 623.
90 *Ibid.*

4 The discovery of America

1 See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Materiales para la historia de América Latina* (México, Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente, 1975).
2 V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism (A popular outline)* (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1978), p. 81.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 76.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 81.
5 See biographical notes in the appendix.
6 Manuel Gómez, *Survey* (October 1964), p. 43.
7 See *Theses, Resolutions and Manifestoes of the First Four Congresses of the Third International* (London, Ink Link Ltd, 1980), p. 76.
8 *Congress of the Peoples of the East*, pp. 85–8.
9 'Sur la revolution en Amérique. Appel à la classe ouvrière des deux Amériques'. *L'Internationale Communiste*, January 1921, pp. 3307–24.
10 *Ibid.*, pp. 3311–12.
11 *Ibid.*, p. 3321.
12 *Ibid.*, p. 3315.
13 *Inprecorr*, 26 January 1923, p. 48.

14 *Ibid.*
15 'Down with American Imperialism in Nicaragua!'. *Inprecorr*, 4 February 1927, p. 247. The Young Communist International had also issued a manifesto: *Inprecorr*, 28 January 1927, p. 211.
16 Jules Humbert-Droz, 'Questions of the Latin American Countries. Co-report on Questions of the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonial Countries. 6th World Congress of the Communist International (Full Report)', *Inprecorr*, 17 October 1928, p. 1300.
17 *Ibid.*
18 At the Buenos Aires Conference, the Peruvian delegate Zamora read these words presumably written by the theoretician Mariátegui: 'The Revolution of Independence is still too alive in the minds of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie.' *El Movimiento*, p. 149.
19 Cárdenas from Colombia, *Inprecorr*, 8 November 1928, p. 1457.
20 *Inprecorr*, 17 October 1928, p. 1302.
21 *Ibid.*, p. 1355. The real name of Travin was Sergei Gusev. See Kahan, 'Identification of Pseudonyms', p. 185.
22 *Ibid.*, p. 1302.
23 J. Degras, *TCI Documents*, vol. 2, p. 532.
24 *VIième Congrès de l'International Communiste*, p. 1182.
25 *Ibid.*
26 *Ibid.*, p. 1183.
27 The Brazilian *pronunciamiento* led by Prestes in 1935, as well as the Cuban Revolution in the sixties; Nicaragua's Sandinista Revolution in the late seventies, and also the Chilean triumph of the Popular Front with Allende have been, in spite of some appearances, movements led by the radical urban petty-bourgeoisie. The origin of those movements is located in the cities, their principal slogans (perhaps with the exception of Chile) have been those related to democratic liberties. The support of the peasant masses came mainly *after* the victory of those movements.
28 *La Correspondencia Sudamericana*, Buenos Aires, May 1929, p. 1.
29 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
30 *Ibid.*
31 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
32 *Ibid.*
33 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
34 *El movimiento*, p. 21.
35 *Ibid.*, p. 43.
36 *Resoluciones*, p. 2.
37 *La lucha por el Leninismo en América Latina* (Buenos Aires, Ed. Del Bureau Sudamericano de la Internacional Comunista, 1932), p. 16.
38 See Wang Ming, *The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonial Countries* (London, Modern Books Ltd., 1935), pp. 23–9.
39 To compare the 'image' that the Comintern gave of Latin America (including the concepts of 'Latin America' or 'South America' themselves), with the economic, social and political realities of the Continent at that moment is out of our subject. A very accurate analysis of those problems was made by a selected group of Latin American social scientists in the two volumes edited by the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales de la Universidad Autónoma de México, *América Latina: historia de*

medio siglo. Vol. 1 – América del Sur; Vol. 2 – Mexico, Centroamérica y el Caribe. (México, Siglo XXI Editores, 1977, vol. 1 and 1981, vol. 2).

5 Latin America in the world revolution

1 The article of Zinoviev was published in the first number of the organ of the Communist International (Russian edition) in 1919. Quoted by Milos Hájek, *Storia dell'Internazionale Communista* (Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1975), p. 9.
2 *Le programme de l'Internationale Communiste.* Projets présentés à la discussion du Vième Congrès Mondial (Paris, Librairie de 'L'Humanité', 1924), p. 45. In the introduction (p. 4), it is called 'the famous Bukharin draft'.
3 *L'Internationale Communiste*, Organe du Comité Executif de l'Internationale Communiste. Moscou (Kremlin)–Petrograd (Smolny), January 1921, pp. 3307–24.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 3314.
5 *Ibid.*, pp. 3323–4.
6 This idea of the 'will to power' will be insistently repeated by Rómulo Betancourt from 1941 to 1945. See his book *Venezuela: política y petróleo* (México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1956), pp. 90–7, 133 and *passim*.
7 This idea had been strongly attacked by a 'central American comrade' in the organ of the South American Secretariat of the Comintern and, albeit recognizing that the style of the article was anything but 'cordial', Victorio Codovilla agreed with the criticism. *El movimiento revolucionario sudamericano*, p. 194. Actually, Salvador de la Plaza was a Venezuelan Communist exiled in Mexico.
8 V. I. Lenin, 'What is to be done?' in *Collected Works* (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1978), vol. 5, pp. 347–529.
9 *Inprecorr*, 26 January 1923, p. 48.
10 Haya de la Torre claimed that he was 'adapting' in some way the theories of Albert Einstein to the political realm, and thus, the 'space–time' of America being different from that of Europe, the thesis of Lenin on imperialism as the last stage of capitalism had to be reversed, because in America it was instead its first stage.
11 See Vilém Kahan, 'Identification of Pseudonyms', pp. 177–92.
12 *Inprecorr*, 17 March 1926.
13 *Inprecorr*, 20 December 1926, pp. 1539–40. Treint was a French delegate, who spoke against both the Trotsky and Bukharin theses on the subject.
14 N. Bukharin, 'La Situation Internationale et les Tâches de l'IC' *VIième Congrès de l'Internationale Communiste 17 Juillet–1er Septembre 1928.* Publié par *La Correspondance Internationale* (Feltrinelli reprint, 1967), p. 10 (henceforth it will be quoted as *VIième Congrès*.
15 *VIième Congrès*, p. 68.
16 A. Stirner, 'Development and perspectives de la Révolution Mexicaine et la Tactique du Parti Comuniste'. *L'Internationale*, 1 August 1928, p. 1222.
17 Kahan, *'Contribution'*, p. 185.
18 *VIième Congrès*, p. 1575.
19 *Ibid.*, p. 1265.
20 'Proyecto de tesis sobre el movimiento revolucionario de la América Latina'. *La Correspondencia Sudamericana*, Revista quincenal editada por el Secretariado Sudamericano de la Internacional Comunista. Buenos Aires, May 1929, p. 8. The introduction stated that this document had been prepared by 'the Latin American

Commission at the Sixth Congress and *accepted as a basis* by the Presidium of the Executive of the Communist International' (p. 1).

21 For the identification of Suarez with Siqueiros, see Donald L. Herman, *The Comintern in Mexico* (Washington, Public Affairs Press, 1974), p. 88.
22 *El Movimiento*, p. 182.
23 *Ibid.*
24 *Ibid.*, p. 183.
25 *Ibid.*, p. 179.
26 *Ibid.*, p. 122.
27 *Ibid.*, p. 80.
28 'Proyecto de tesis', p. 11–12.
29 *El Movimiento*, p. 193.
30 *Resoluciones*, pp. 3–4.
31 *VIième Congrès*, p. 1729. The French text speaks of 'military force' instead of 'auxiliary force', which is obviously a mistake corrected in the English Edition of *Inprecorr*, 12 December 1928, p. 1661.
32 Wang Ming, *The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonial Countries* (London, Modern Books, n/d [1953]), p. 4.
33 *Ibid.*, p. 5 (underlined by Wang Ming).
34 *VIième Congrès*, p. 1732.
35 *Ibid.*, p. 1266.
36 The programme was published in *VIième Congrès*, pp. 1597–615. This programme is completed here, to make the comparison, with the 'Theses on the revolutionary movement in the colonies and semi-colonies', *ibid.*, pp. 1727–42. See also J. Degras, *TCI Documents*, vol. 2, pp. 471–548.
37 *Resoluciones*, pp. 25–30.
38 *VIième Congrès*, p. 1173.
39 See 'Left-wing Communism, an infantile disorder' in V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 31, pp. 17–118.
40 For a further explanation of the thought of Bukharin regarding this so-called *smychka* (union or alliance), see chapters 5 and 6 of Stephen Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 123–212.
41 *VIième Congrès*, p. 1264.
42 *Ibid.*, p. 1232.
43 *Ibid.*, p. 1605.
44 See the 'Proyecto de Tesis' in *La Correspondencia*, May 1929, p. 10.
45 Kahan, 'Identification of Pseudonyms', p. 185.
46 *VIième Congrès*, p. 1259.
47 *Ibid.*, p. 1265.
48 The tone of the Comintern's appraisal of the Chinese Revolution was given by a 'resolution on the Chinese question' adopted unanimously on 25 February 1928 by the ECCI and which had been presented by Stalin, Bukharin, Sian and Lee on behalf of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China. Its first point states that 'The present period of the Chinese revolution is a period of bourgeois democratic revolution, which has not been completed either from an economic point of view (the agrarian revolution and the abolition of feudal relations) nor from the point of view of the class character of the government (dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry . . .).' *Inprecorr*, 15 March 1928, p. 321.
49 *La Correspondencia*, May 1929, p. 17.

50 E. H. Carr, *Foundations of a planned economy 1926–1929* (London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1978), vol. 3, p. 98.
51 The founders of the APRA in 1924, as well as the so-called 'generation of 1928' in Venezuela and 'generation of 1930' in Cuba (who later founded the democratic left-wing parties) were mainly students.
52 *VIième Congrès*, p. 1266.
53 Carr, *Foundations*, vol. 3, p. 977.
54 Kahan, 'Identification of Pseudonyms', p. 184. His speech in *VIième Congrès*, p. 1269.
55 *Ibid.* His speech in *VIième Congrès*, p. 1420.
56 *VIième Congrès*, p. 1579.
57 *El Movimiento*, p. 152.

6 Power as theory

1 Jay Lovestone, who led the 'right-wing' majority at the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of the United States, said in a discussion with another American delegate (Bittelman), that 'The Central Committee . . . maintains that the Anglo-American conflict has displaced the Anglo-German conflict of pre-war days.' *Inprecorr*, 23 August 1928, p. 396. In an article published in 1933, G. Sinani, who was the director of the Latin American Bureau at Moscow, wrote that 'In the feverish atmosphere of the slipping of the capitalist world into a new imperialist slaughter . . . *every* conflict, even the smallest, may become the direct prologue for war. But so much the greater is the attention which must be paid to the conflicts in which the interests of the USA and England come into direct and immediate conflict, because it is just in these conflicts that we see most clearly the basic antagonisms in the camp of imperialism which are leading to a World Imperialist War.' *The Communist International*, February 1933, p. 55.
2 *El movimiento*, p. 34.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 15.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 41.
5 *Inprecorr*, 25 July 1928, p. 708.
6 *Ibid.*
7 *La Correspondencià*, May 1929, p. 21.
8 In the first public meeting of his party 'Democratic Action' in 1941, Secretary General Rómulo Betancourt made clear that his party was not asking for the confiscating of private lands, but that the state should foment agrarian reform utilizing its own properties. See Naudy Suárez (ed.), *Programas políticos venezolanos de la primera mitad del siglo XX* (Caracas, Colegio Universitario 'Francisco de Miranda', 1977), vol. 2, p. 27.
9 While the Uruguayans said that it would be understood by the peasants of their country, the Brazilians did not have the same opinion and the Bolivians, without explicitly expressing an opinion, seemed reluctant. *La Correspondencia*, 15 May 1929, pp. 28–37.
10 See the chapter 'Victory in Defeat' of Isaac Deutscher's *The Prophet Armed*.
11 *L'Internationale*, Janvier 1921, p. 3321.
12 Frank Borkenau, *World Communism*, pp. 216–17.
13 This tendency was strong mainly among some Americans who came from the

Anarcho-syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World as well as among Spanish Anarchists and German 'Left-Socialists'.

14 *El movimiento*, p. 74.
15 *El movimiento*, p. 155.
16 *Ibid.*, p. 190.
17 That is the idea that, at the end of the debates and as a conclusion, Codovilla tried to counter in Siqueiros. *El movimiento*, p. 191. Siqueiros denied having said such a thing (*ibid.*, p. 195), but his allusion to Sandino was quite clear.
18 *El movimiento*, p. 191.
19 *Resoluciones*, p. 4.
20 *Ibid.*, p. 43.
21 See *Treinta años de lucha del partido Comunista de Colombia* (Bogotá, Ediciones Los Comuneros, 1960), p. 14.
22 For the differences in organization between the Socialist and Communist Parties, see Maurice Duverger, *Les Partis politiques* (Paris, Armand Colin, 1977).
23 *La Correspondencia*, May 1929, s/p [21–2].
24 *L'Internationale*, August 1928, p. 1362.
25 *Treinta años de lucha*, p. 21.
26 *Ibid.*, p. 65.
27 *L'internationale*, August 1928, p. 1207.
28 *El movimiento*, p. 84.
29 *VIième Congrès*, p. 1182 bis.
39 *Ibid.*, p. 1575.
31 *El movimiento*, p. 82.
32 *Ibid.*, p. 85.
33 *La Correspondencia*, May 1929, p. 6.
34 McKenzie, *Comintern and World Revolution*, p. 138.
35 See Milos Hajek, *Storia dell'Internazionale*, pp. 149–227.
36 See the 'Proyecto' in *La Correspondencia*, May 1929, p. 15.
37 Humbert-Droz, *L'Internationale*, August 1928, p. 1356. It was, obviously, an exaggeration to speak of the existence of such a party in Venezuela: as a matter of fact, the Venezuelan Revolutionary Party was an organization founded in exile with the individual adhesion of some Communists, but which never had any influence in Venezuela, albeit some of its leaders tried fruitlessly to invade Venezuelan territory in order to overthrow the dictatorship of Juan Vicente Gómez.
38 'Proyecto' in *La Correspondencia*, p. 15.
39 *Resoluciones*, p. 5.
40 *El movimiento*, p. 100.
41 *Ibid.*, p. 171.
42 *Ibid.*, pp. 189–90.

7 The assault 'from outside'

1 Wang Ming, *The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonial Countries*, pp. 23–4.
2 *La Correspondance Internationale*, December 4, 1935, p. 1705.
3 Wang Ming, *The Revolutionary Movement*, p. 24.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
5 *Ibid.*
6 'L'offensive du fascisme et les tâches de l'Internationale Communiste dans la lutte

pour l'unité de la classe ouvrière contre le fascisme', *VIième Congrès*, p. 1162. (My italics.)

7 In 1931, acting on behalf of the Comintern, Arthur Ewert met Prestes in Montevideo, as he himself confessed some years later. 'Memorandum of conversation with Arthur Ewert and Elise Ewert, alias Harry Berger and Michla Lenczycki, respectively'. 800/Ewert Arthur/16. Record Group Number 59. USANA. Leoncio Basbaum said that Ewert came to make arrangements to send Prestes to the Soviet Union in order 'to save Prestes and liquidate *prestismo*'. John W. F. Dulles, *Anarchists and Communists in Brazil 1900–1935* (Austin and London, University of Texas Press, 1973), p. xv.

8 *A classe operaria*, organo del PCB do Brasil (SBIC), September 11, 1934, p. 4.

9 Dulles, *Anarchists and Communists*, p. xv.

10 Robert M. Levine, *The Vargas Regime: the critical years 1934–1938* (New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 102.

11 'The Traitorous Government of Getulio Vargas'. 832–00/Rev/479. USANA.

12 An accurate report is in Levine, *The Vargas Regime*, pp. 100–24.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 100.

14 The American embassy in Rio de Janeiro told the Department of State, on November 27, 1935, that 'The *A Manhãa*, local Communist newspaper, this morning scattered through the city and in all army and navy barracks, a special edition announcing uprisings all over the country and featuring Carlos Prestes, a member of the Comintern, as commander-in-chief of the Revolution . . . This was evidently prepared in advance of last night uprising.' 832.00/Rev/471, USANA.

15 832.00/Rev/458, USANA.

16 Levine, *The Vargas Regime*, p. 106.

17 In a book published by the Brazilian Army in 1973, the author insists in charging the rebels with such abuses, describing the panic of Natalian families when it was announced that a round up parade of girls would take place in the city, in order to allow the rebel chiefs to choose three concubines each. José Campos de Aragão, *A intentona comunista de 1935* (Rio de Janeiro, Biblioteca do Exército Editora, 1973), pp. 55–6. Levine gives several examples of demonstrated exaggerations and lies in what he calls 'inevitable atrocity stories', *The Vargas Regime*, p. 110.

18 832.00/Rev/487, USANA.

19 *Ibid.*

20 *Ibid.*

21 Ronald H. Chilcote, *The Brazilian Communist Party. Conflict and Integration 1922–1972* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 148.

22 *Inprecorr*, February 15, 1936, p. 231.

23 On November 29, 1935, the Department of State sent a telegram to the American Embassy in Rio, asking for the 'nature of evidence tending to show connection of Moscow, Iumtourg, and some organization in New York with financing and direction of this movement'. 832.00/Rev/458, USANA. The person most interested in getting such proofs seemed to be President Terra of Uruguay (see 832.00/Rev/460), who eventually broke diplomatic relations with the USSR after a rough personal encounter which his Ambassador had with Litvinov in the Council of the League of Nations. *Inprecorr*, February 1, 1936, pp. 177–82. Nevertheless, for some time such news items were treated 'rather sceptically by President Vargas and most members of the government' as the Foreign Affairs Minister Macedo Soares told the American Ambassador. 832.00/Rev/460, USANA.

24 The memorandum sent by the Embassy envoy who spoke with Ewert said that 'Upon arriving at the jail on the Morro Santo Antonio, we were met by Galvão, the chief jailer, who said that the pair were "fantasticos" in standing up under punishment; that they would reveal nothing and that he took off his hat to them'. 800.00B/Ewert, Arthur/16, USANA.
25 832.00/Rev/483, USANA.
26 832.00/Rev/486, USANA.
27 832.00/Rev/554, 555, 556, USANA, as well as some journal clippings enclosed, presumably from *O Journal*.
28 'Memorandum of conversation with Arthur Ewert . . .' 800.00B/Ewert, Arthur/16, USANA.
29 He allegedly attended the Congress of the Communist Party of America in 1927, probably as a delegate for the Comintern. 'Telegram sent by Hull from the Department of State on Jan. 18, 1936.' 832.00/Rev/507, USANA.
30 As a matter of fact, Ewert was thirty-nine years old in 1935; and the Comintern was founded only sixteen years before.
31 800.00B/Ewert, Arthur/26, USANA.
32 The list of documents contains among others: '41. Minutes of the meeting of the Piauhy Regional Committee in Parnahyba on March 24, 1935'. 800.00B/Ewert, Arthur/29, USANA.
33 'Memorandum'.
34 Among them, an American citizen 'obviously tuberculose', Victor Allen Barron who was allegedly tortured and committed suicide. 800.00B/Barron, Victor/1, USANA.

8 The taking 'from inside': National Union

1 Such was the case for Enrica Collotti-Pischel and Giuliano Procacci, whose bibliographies end in 1935, based on the material available in the Istituto Feltrinelli at Milan; as well as the book of Milos Hajek, *Storia dell'Internazionale Comunista (1921–1935)*, already mentioned.
2 It should be recalled that the cult of Stalin began in 1929, with his fiftieth birthday. But the ritual was performed for the first time before the International at the Seventh Congress.
3 See Wang Ming, *The Revolutionary Movement*, passim.
4 For the version of Ravines, see *The Yenan Way*, p. 146.
5 *From the Fourth to the Fifth World Congresses*. Report of the ECCI (London, Caledonian Press, 1924), p. 88.
6 *The Communist International between the Fifth and the Sixth World Congresses* (London, Communist Party of Great Britain, 1928), pp. 385–8.
7 *VIIième Congrès*, pp. 1018–19.
8 See Chapter 2.
9 *VIIième Congrès*, p. 1726.
10 *World News and Views*, 19 November 1938, p. 1265.
11 See p. 1370.
12 The American Chargé d'Affaires in La Habana, Albert Nufer, thought that 'Batista has been using the Communists to offset the powerful and uncompromising Auténticos, particularly in labor and social matters.' Nufer to Secretary of State,

'Activities of the Communist Party', 9 December, 1942, p. 1. 837.00B/371. RGN 59. USANA.

13 Hugh Thomas, *Cuba or the Pursuit of Freedom* (London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971), p. 711.

14 Nufer says that 'For some time, Lázaro Peña, Communist leader in the House of Representatives, has been able to control the Ministry of Labor due to his access to Batista. Whenever labor disputes have arisen involving Communists, Batista has been careful to favor them.' See Note 12 above.

15 Philip J. Jaffe, 'The Rise and Fall of Earl Browder', *Survey*, Spring 1972, p. 28.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

17 Thomas, *Cuba*, p. 734.

18 This speech of Blas Roca was published as 'El Cambio de Nombre' in the theoretical legal organ of the Venezuelan Communist Party, *Principios*, February–March 1944, pp. 15–26 (The confused wording of the quotation is not the problem of translation, as it comes from the speech itself: it is evident that Blas Roca is embarrassed).

19 *Ibid.*

20 See p. 3.

21 Juan Bautista Fuenmayor, *Historia de la Venezuela Política Contemporánea 1899–1969* (Caracas, 1976), Tomo 3, vol. 1, p. 93.

22 See Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1944* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 175; as well as Kewes S. Karol, *Les Guerrilleros au Pouvoir* (París, Robert Laffont, 1970), p. 104.

23 'Ante la Elección del 41'. *El Martillo*, October 1939, p. 2.

24 The president was not elected by popular vote, but by the Congress which was controlled by the government. In those conditions, campaigning for president was obviously symbolic.

25 'Apoyamos a Rómulo Gallegos'. *El Martillo*, April 1941, p. 1.

26 The Communists showed no fears of being characterized as 'unconditionally' supporting the government: an article of their legal organ in 1942 was entitled 'Somos Incondicionales de Pueblo'. *Aquí está!*, 18 February 1942, p. 3.

27 Fuenmayor, *Historia*, Tomo 3, vol. 2, p. 697.

28 Juan B. Fuenmayor, *1928–1948. Veinte años de política* (Madrid, Editorial Mediterránea, 1968), p. 263.

29 *Aquí está!*, 7 February 1945, p. 1.

30 *Aquí está!*, 28 February 1945, p. 3.

9 The last step: Browderism

1 The article was published in the theoretical monthly organ of the French Communist Party, *Cahiers du Communisme*, in April 1945. Philip J. Jaffe thinks, after comparing dates, texts and political circumstances, that the article was written directly in Moscow and sent to Duclos by means of Thorez. 'The Rise', pp. 54–9.

2 Jacques Fauvet, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français 1920–1976* (Paris, Fayard, 1977), p. 185; see also Georges Lefranc, *Le Front Populaire* (París, Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), p. 96.

3 Fauvet, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français*, p. 142.

4 J. Degras, *TCI Documents*, vol. 3, pp. 472–3 and 475.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 477–8.

6 Victorio Codovilla, *Por la Unión Nacional y el Gobierno Provisorio* (Montevideo, Editorial Selecciones, 1944), p. 40.
7 *Ibid.*, p. 16.
8 *Ibid.*, p. 59.
9 The document of the Chilean CP was published under the title 'Elementos Teórico-prácticos en que se Basa la Política de Unidad Nacional' in the Venezuelan Communist weekly *Aquí está!*, 13 January 1945, p. 8.
10 'I spoke this afternoon with Sr Ricardo Fonseca, Deputy of the Communist Party and editor of the Communist Party organ, EL SIGLO . . . He told me the party plans to establish a newspaper in Coquimbo, and a member of the EL SIGLO staff named Fuentes will be sent there as its editor. He also hopes to improve the equipment of the Communist weekly in Valdivia, EL PUEBLO, and transform it into a daily. He also intends to improve the equipment of EL POPULAR in Antofagasta. All this is part of a plan to have all these editorial outlets in good working order by election time . . . Fonseca expects to add two extra pages to EL SIGLO beginning March 10th, devoting one of these pages to cable news and the other to Chilean affairs. He hopes to be able to use more of our material when this change takes place.' Heath to Ziffren. 'Memorandum of a conversation held with Sr Ricardo Fonseca, Communist Deputy and editor of the Communist Party organ, EL SIGLO', March 3 1944. 800.00B/Fonseca Aguayo, Ricardo/5, USANA.
11 Philip J. Jaffe, 'The Rise', p. 14.
12 *Teheran, Our Path in War and Peace* (New York, International Publishers Co., Inc., 1944) and *Teheran and America* (New York, Workers Library Publishers, 1944).
13 *Our Path*, p. 69.
14 *Ibid.*, p. 70.
15 *Ibid.*
16 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
17 *Ibid.*, pp. 70–1.
18 *Teheran and America*, p. 24.
19 The Cuban Communists were not, then, alone in this period, even if, as a historian of the Cuban process points out, they 'were closer than almost any other world Communist party to the repudiation of Marx's or Lenin's theories of imperialism and class struggle'. Hugh Thomas, *Cuba or the Pursuit of Freedom* (London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971), p. 734.
20 *Our Path*, p. 66 (underlined by Browder).
21 *Ibid.*, p. 67.
22 *Ibid.*
23 *Ibid.*, p. 71.
24 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
25 *Teheran and America*, p. 39.
26 *Ibid.*, p. 40 (underlined by Browder).
27 *Ibid.*, p. 39.
28 *Ibid.*, p. 41.
29 The Secretary General, Browder, was expelled from the Communist Party of the United States; the same measure was taken against the Secretary General of the Colombian Party, Augusto Duran; the Communist Party of Venezuela split into three groups. Only the Cubans remained untouched.
30 Thomas thinks that from 1934, the relations between Cuban and American

Communists were even closer than those of the former with their Latin American comrades. *Cuba*, p. 692.

31 When in 1945 he was sent as American Ambassador to Argentina, Perón was able to conduct his campaign for President under the slogan 'Braden o Perón'.

32 The party of Grau San Martín.

33 Nufer to the Secretary of State, 837.00B/371, USANA.

34 Sidney E. O'Donoghue to Secretary of State, July 29, 1941, p. 3. 837.00B/360. USANA.

35 George S. Messermith to the Secretary of State, November 10, 1941. 837.00B/437, USANA.

36 Ellis O. Briggs to the Secretary of State, December 14, 1943, 837.00B/441, USANA.

37 Braden to Secretary of State, March 31, 1944. 837.00B/465, USANA.

38 *Idem.*

39 Braden to Secretary of State, March 13, 1944. 837.00B/458, USANA.

40 Braden to Berle, April 28, 1944. 837.00B/477, USANA.

41 Braden to the Secretary of State, 3 December 1943. 837.00B/437, USANA.

42 Braden to the Secretary of State. Confidential. March 16, 1944. 837.00B/461, USANA.

43 The Chargé d'Affaires *ad interim* stated that 'There seems no doubt that the Colombian Communist Party, now the Socialist-Democratic Party, is a Communist front organization . . .' There is a manuscript correction: 'No. It is a Communist Party [signature unreadable]', Paul C. Daniels to the Secretary of State, November 13, 1944, p. 2, 821.00B/11–1344, USANA.

44 Julius O. Holmes to John C. Wiley, American Ambassador, 6 March 1945, 821.00B/11–1344, USANA.

45 Memorandum on 'Communist Activities in Colombia, June 16, 1943, p. 20. 821.00B/92, USANA.

46 Memorandum 'Reaction in Quito to the Announced Dissolution of the Communist International', by Juan L. Gorrell, June 3, 1943, p. 3. 800.00B/Communist International/295, USANA.

47 Edward L. Reed to Secretary of State. Confidential: Reactions to Dissolution of the Third International. Buenos Aires, June 3, 1943, 800.00B/Communist International/285, USANA.

48 Some already mentioned in this study were: the 1935 International Control Commission's decision to expel two militants from the Venezuelan CP and another from the Portuguese Party; the dissolution of the Polish Party in 1938; and the decision of the Communist Party of the United States to give up its affiliation with the Comintern in 1940.

49 Telegram from Lane to the Secretary of State, May 29, 1943, p. 1. 800.00B/ Communist International/260, USANA.

50 Telegram from Braden to Secretary of State, May 24, 1943. 800.00B/Communist International/260, USANA.

51 Joseph Flack to the Secretary of State. Strictly confidential. Memorandum on Dissolution of the Communist International, p. 1. 800.00B/Communist International/289, USANA.

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Index

Agosti, Aldo, 12
Agrarian question, 68, 69, 93, 94 (agrarian revolution), 95, 98, 99
Aguirre Cerda, Pedro, 135
Alba, Victor, 183
Alexander, Robert, J., 46, 51, 54
Alexis, Jacques Stephen, 183
Allan, Hellen, *see* Roy, Evelyn
Allan, Robert, *see* Roy, Manabendranath Bhatacharya
Allen, 181
Almanza, 40
Altobelli, 41
American Bureau of Amsterdam, 25–6
Americo-Ledo, *see* Lacerda, Fernando de
Anarchism, 8 (Anarcho-syndicalists), 20, 45, 47, 51, 161 (A. Pereira, ex-anarchist, founder of the CP Brazil)
Anti-Hitlerite coalition, 135
Anti-Imperialist League, *see* Imperialism
Anti-Komitern Pact, 8
Antonov-Ossenko, 121
APRA (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance), 9, 50, 58, 81, 96, 103, 159
Araja, Fermin, 42
Archives of the Comintern, 3, 11, and *Commentary on sources*, 164–9 *passim*
Arzubide, List, 184
Asia, 1, 2, 8, 22, 65, 66, 69, 78, 162 ('Asio-centrism')
Austin, 177

Babalanova, Angelica, 34
Baku (Congress of the Peoples of the East), 22, 67, 70
Baliñas, Carlos, 48
Banderas, *see* Pestkowski, Stanislaw
Barnard, A., 37
Batista, Fulgencio, 127–31 *passim*, 143–4
Bazan, Armando, 184
Berger, Harry, *see* Ewert, Arthur
Betancourt, Rómulo, 53, 130, 132, 171, 187, 189
Bhatacharya, Manabendranath, *see* Roy, Manabendranath Bhatacharya
Bittelman, Alexander, 30, 189
'Blas Roca', *see* Calderío, Francisco
Bloure, 38
Bolshevik Party, 7, 15, 16, 17, 20, 23, 34, 150, 154, 156, 158
'Bolshevisation' of the CP, 25, 43, 48, 51, 53, 101, 102, 154
Borkenau, Frank, 20, 100
Borkes, *see* Contreras Labarca, Carlos
Borodin, Mikhail, *see* Gruzenberg, Mikhail
Bourgeoisie, 7, 12 (petty-bourgeois), 14, 19, 20, 22, 23, 66, 69, 72, 74, 78, 84, (liberal petty-bourgeoisie), 86, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 103 (petty-bourgeoisie), 110, 111, 112 (bourgeois nationalism), 121, 140, 146 (Bourgeois Front)
Braden, Spruille, 143–5
Brandão, 172
Braunthal, Julius, 20
Brooks, Abed, 127, 130
Browder, Earl, 30, 61, 81, 122, 129, 132–3, 134–48 *passim*, 154, 155
Buck, Tim, 61
Bueno (Blas Roca), 40
Bukharin, Nicolai, 15, 18–19, 23, 24, 38, 39, 70, 77, 82, 89, 91
Bureau for Propaganda in SA, 27

Calderío Francisco, as Blas Roca, 42, 48, 61, 125, 128, 129, 130, 144, 162 (biog)
Canellas, Antonio B., 26, 27, 39
Capitalism, 14, 18, 19, 21, 58, 65, 66,

69, 71 (capital invested in South America), 72, 74, 75, 77, 85, 89, 90, 97, 98, 111, 115, 133, 137, 138–40 (American Capitalism), 141, 142, 143
Cardenas, 83, 103, 186
Caribbean Bureau, 30–1, 61
Carr, E. H., 95
Carranza, Venustiano, 47
Carrillo, 42, 83, 98
Castro, Fidel, 69
Cazón, Manuel, 126, 177
Chibás, Eduardo, 128
Chicherin, Georgii, 34
Chilcote, Ronald H., 115
China, 8 (Chinese Revolution), 23, 29, 66, 70, 72 (Chinese *compradores*), 93, 94 (The Chinese example), 101 (the lack of a "red caudillo" in), 114, 119 (defeat of the Chinese CP), 156
Chü, Chiu-pai, 93
Churchill, 135, 136, 138
'Class against class', 23, 25
Classe Operaria (A), 191
Claudin, Fernando, 22
Codovilla, Vittorio, 28, 29, 33, 40, 41, 42, 45, 50, 54, 56, 57, 62, 74 (semi-colonial character of Latin America), 82 (Latin America), 84 (on revolution), 98, 101, 105 (party blocks), 118, 121 (Spain), 136 (Argentina), 156 (biog.), 158, 161, 184, 187
Colonial, semi-colonial and dependent countries, 9, 20–4 *passim*, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 78, 82, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 151
Comintern Congresses:
First (1919): 21, 38, 57, 79
Second (1920): 17, 21, 22, 38, 45, 157, 162
Third (1921): 17, 22, 23, 38, 42
Fourth (1922): 20, 23, 39, 42, 124
Fifth (1924): 17, 23, 39, 124, 125
Sixth (1928): 3, 19, 23, 39, 42, 50, 65, 70, 74, 83, 85, 89, 90, 93, 95–6, 104, 151, 157, 158, 160, 163
Seventh (1935): 24, 40, 42, 44, 52, 53, 85, 109, 110, 111, 121, 122, 125, 126
Communist (The), 61
Communist Manifesto, 13, 135
Communist Party Cells, 101; International Communist Organization, 10, 11, 30, 32, 33, 62, 130, 145
CP of Argentina, 26, 27, 28, 38, 39, 40, 42, 44, 45, 54, 55, 56, 57, 62, 101, 126, 135, 147, 149, 151, 156, 157, 161
CP of Bolivia, 29, 50, 55, 100
CP of Brazil, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 39, 45, 46, 55, 56, 109–20 *passim*, 151, 152, 154, 161
CP of Chile, 9, 28, 35, 39, 42, 44, 46, 55, 61, 62, 123–7 *passim*, 135, 136, 137, 151, 156
CP of Costa Rica, 44, 49, 53
CP of Cuba, 9, 10, 35, 39, 48, 49, 61, 127–9 *passim*, 130, 143–6 *passim*, 147, 151, 157, 158, 160, 162
CP of Ecuador, 2, 50, 51, 72, 102, 151, 160
CP of El Salvador, 2, 9 (the first Communist insurrection in America), 52, 160
CP of Guatemala, 53, 55
CP of Mexico, 26, 39, 40, 47, 48, 54, 55, 61, 62, 83, 156, 158, 162, 163
CP of Panama, 52, 55
CP of Paraguay, 29, 39, 49, 50, 55, 56
CP of Peru, 35, 49, 50, 54 (Tenth October), 55, 58, 101 and 159 (opposition to form a CP)
CP of Spain, 109 (searching for alliances), 121, 126 (Civil War), 145
CP of Uruguay, 28, 29, 39, 40 (delegate to the Plenum of the ECCI), 42 (member of the ECCI), 46, 47, 55, 59, 157
CP of the USA, 2, 8, 61, 81, 122, 129, 132, 135, 136, 137–42 *passim*, 143, 152
CP of Venezuela, 39 (Sixth World Congress), 40 (Seventh World Congress), 51, 52, 54 (Tenth October), 55, 56, 61, 62, 129–33 *passim*, 148 (De la Plaza), 157, 159, 160
Communist Political Association, 129, 142, 146
Communist Revolutionary Union, *see* CP of Cuba
Communists of the Dominican Republic, 53
Communists of Haiti, *see* Jacques Roumain
Contreras, Carlos *see* Vidali, Vittorio
Contreras Labarca, Carlos, 40 (as Borkes), 61, 126, 156 (biog.)

Correspondencia Sudamericana (La), 28, 31, 55, 56
Cremet, 32, 27, 177
Crisis of 1929, 19, 104
Cuban Revolution, 2, 61, (of 1933), 68, 81, 154

Darcy, 27
Democratic–bourgeois revolution, 86–8 *passim*, 90, 92, 93, 152
Democratic Liberties, 92, 94, 95, 111, 114 ('land and liberty'), 126, 133, 152
De Rutgers, 21
Deutscher, Isaac, 99
Dimitrov, Georgii, 8, 137, 139, 148
Diplomacy, 10, 33 (Narkomindel), 34 (and subversion), 37 (gold from Moscow), 71, 143 (Braden in Cuba), 144, 145, 146
Dissolution of the comintern, 34, 37 (end of its institutional life), 62, 92, 121 (ceased functioning), 123 (agonizing), 127, 135 (dying), 142, 146–8 *passim*, 154, 155
Duclos, Jacques, 134
Duran, Augusto, 194

Eberlein, 57
ECCI (Executive Committee of the Communist International), 16, 17, 18, 24, 27, 28, 40, 41, 42, 44, 47, 48, 51, 56, 69, 70, 72, 74, 103, 104, 112, 116, 118, 123, 124, 125, 134, 147, 156, 157, 158, 161, 162, 163
Engels, Friedrich, 66, 133
Ewert, Arthur, 35, 117–20 (the 1935 revolt of Prestes), 157 (biog.)
Ewert, Elisa, 117–18

Factionalism, 20 (prohibition in the Bolshevik Party)
Fascism, 19 (Nazism), 24, 60 (Nazism), 62, 113 (*Intergralistas*), 114, 117, ('anti-fascist refugees'), 121 (anti-fascist bourgeoisie), 127, 129, 130, 131, 133, 136, 144 (Nazi aggression), 145
Federalism, 7, 17, 25, 121 ('a loose propaganda association')
First International, 7, 14
Flores Magón, Enrique, 117
Fonseca Aguayo, Ricardo, 137
Fraina (USA), 26, 38
Fuenmayor, Juan Bautista, 61, 130, 132–3, 197 (biog.)

Gallegos, Rómulo, 132
García Aguero, 144
Ghioldi, Orestes, 184
Ghioldi, Rodolfo, 28, 35, 42, 45, 56, 58, 118–20 (the 1935 revolt of Prestes), 125, 147, 157 (biog.), 172
Glaufbauf, Frederic, 32, 177
Gómez, Eugenio, 42, 47, 56, 157 (biog.)
González (Spain), 26
González Videla, Gabriel, 46
Gottwald, 8
Gramsci, Antonio, 13, 26
Grau San Martin, Ramon, 127–8, 130
Grecco (Argentina), 26, 39
Grobart, Fabio, 35, 145, 157–8 (biog.)
Gruzenberg, Mikhail, 26, 34; as Borodin, 47, 156 (biog.)
Guitor, Edmundo, 56
Guralksy, A., *see* Heifetz, Abraham
Gusev, Sergei, as Travin, 72, 83

Haya de la Torre, Victor Raúl, 81, 171
Heifetz, Abraham (as A. Guralsky) 32–3, 36–7, 59, 158 (biog.) 177
Hitler, Adolf, 131
Hobsbawm, Eric, 12, 13
Hoover, J. Edgar, 30
Humbert-Droz, Jules, 19, 28, 32, 36, 56, 58, 70–2 (report of Latin America), 74–5 (colonial or semicolonial character of Latin America), 83, 86 (programme of revolution), 93–6 (speech on revolution), 98, 102–5 (composition of CP), 158 (biog.)

Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism, 9, 23, 24, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 74, 75, 79, 81, 85, 87, 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98, 103, 105, 106, 110, 111, 114, 122, 123, 126, 129, 133, 136, 151, 160
Insurrection, 2, 9, 46, 52, 84, 109, 110, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 123, 152
Intellectuals, 8 (writers and artists), 12 (*intelligentsia*), 15, 27, 48, 80, 99, 103, 105, 153, 159 (Mariátegui)
International Control Commission, 16, 17, 42, 52
International Red Aid (IRA), 37, 105

International Socialist Party of Argentina, 45, 179, (and the first World Congress)
Italian Socialist Party, 38, 45
Iumtourg, 117, 191

Kamenev, 15
Karol, K. S., 131
Karracik, 184
Katayama, Sen, 26, 35
Kazanov, 177
Kornfeder, Joseph, 36
Kuomingtang, 23, 111, 156
Kuusinen, Otto, 90, 104

Laborde, Hernán, 61, 62, 158 (biog.)
Lacerda, Carlos, 113
Lacerda, Fernando de, 40, 41, 111
Laferte, Elias, 177
Latin American Bureau at Moscow, 26
Latin American Section at Moscow, 27
Latin Secretariat, 26, 27
Lenczycki, Machla, *see* Ewert, Elisa
Lenin and Leninism, 1, 2, 7, 13–15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 34, 35, 58, 66–8 (Latin America), 71, 77, 80, 89–91 (the peasantry), 101 (party name), 104, 121, 122, 133, 150, 154
Levinson, David, 118
López Contreras, Eleazar, 130–2
Lovestone, Jay, 189
Luis, *see* Humbert-Droz, Jules

Machado, Eduardo, 51–2, 159 (biog.)
Machado, Gerardo, 84, 125, 127–8, 130
Machado, Gustavo, 30–1, 51–2, 159 (biog.)
Machiavelli and Machiavellianism, 13, 15, 20, 85, 97, 123, 150, 154
Mahecha, Raul, 51, 84
Mañach, Jorge, 145
Manhâa (A), 113
Manuilsky, 36
Marinello, Juan, 128
Marx and Marxism, 2, 9, 12, 13, 66, 67, 71, 76, 78, 80, 81, 89, 93, 96, 97, 98, 133, 135, 137, 138, 140, 141, 142, 153, 160
Matayana, 84
MacKenzie, Kermit, 104
Marcucci, 32, 177
Marenco, 40
Mariátegui, José Carlos, 49, 50, 58, 96, 137, 159–60 (biog.)
Marques, 40
Martí, Agustín Farabundo, 9, 52, 160 (biog.)
Martillo (El), 130
Martinez, Maximiliano, 52
Martìnez, Ricardo A., 30, 52, 54, 56, 62, 126–7, 132, 160 (biog.), 177, 184
Marty, André, 121
Matayana, 84
Mayobre, José Antonio, as Ribas, 40
Medina Angarita, Isaías, 131–2
Mella, Julio Antonio, 48, 54, 160, (biog.), 181, 184
Mendizabal, 100
Meriguet, 147
Monroe Doctrine, 67
Montalvo, 127
Montero, Jorge, *see* Ravines, Eudocio
Mora, 40
Morales, 41
Müller, Fellinto, 117

Narkomindel, *see* Diplomacy
National Liberation Alliance or NLA, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 119
Nemo, 32
Nequete, Abilio de, 27
Neruda, Pablo, 46
Nufer, Albert, 144

October Revolution *see* Russian Revolution

Paredes, Ricardo, 50–1, 54, 72–3 (on dependency), 94, 103, 125, 160–1 (biog.)
Pasha, Kemal, 22
Peasantry, 69–70, 73, 74, 76, 79, 84–5, 89–96 *passim* (Latin America), 103–6 (role in Latin American Revolution)
Penelon, Joseph (José), 26, 28, 39, 40, 42, 161 (biog.)
Peña, Lázaro, 128, 144
Pepper, *see* Pógany, József
Pereira, Astrojildo, 39, 42, 54, 161 (biog.), 172, 184
Perón, Juan Domingo, 136
Pestkowski, Stanislaw, 96
Phillips, Charles (aka Manuel Gómez Ramírez and Frank Seaman), 34, 38, 41, 67, 157 (biog.)
Pieck, Wilhem, 8, 124

Pierre, 32, 36, 56, 177
Pintos, Francísco R., 39, 40
Pirela, Juan, *see* Fuenmayor, Juan Bautista
Plaza, Salvador de la, 30, 80, 148, 161 (biog.)
Pontes, Behring *see* Prestes, Luis Carlos
Pógany, Jozsef, 82
Popular Front, 19, 75, 110, 112, 114, 115, 120–3, 126–7, 131, 134, 135, 137
Portocarrero, Julio, 184
Prestes, Luis Carlos, 3, 35, 42, 46, 69, 109, 112–20 *passim* (the 1935 revolt), 122, 125, 152, 154, 161 (biog.)
Prestes, Olga Benario, 36
Prestes–Ewert Committee of the United States, 118
Proletarian Dictatorship, 17, 86, 150
Proletariat, *see* Working class

Race question, 57–8, 88
Radek, Karl, 23, 38, 173
Ragionieri, E., 15, 16
Ramírez, *see* Phillips, Charles
Ravetto, 96
Ravines, Eudocio, 27, 31–2, 35–7, 50, 56, 59, 61, 62, 120, 123, 125, 126, 161 (biog.), 184
Recabarren, Luis Emilio, 8, 46, 123, 162 (biog.), 172
Red International of Labour unions, 29, 28, 54
Reed, John, 67, 70
Reformism, 80, 93, 105, 112
René, 40
Revista Comunista, 31
Revolution (*see also* Russian Revolution and World revolution), 60–1, 65, 68–9, (in the Americas), 73, 75–96 *passim* (in Latin America), 86–92 (socialist, Democratic-Bourgeois and Latin American), 99–106 (leaders of), 109–20 (of Prestes in Brazil), 132
Riasco, Julio, 42
Ribas, *see* Mayobre, José Antonio
Rivera, Diego de, 48
Roca, Blas, *see* Calderío, Francisco
Rodríguez, Carlos Rafael, 128,
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 62, 123, 129, 131, 135, 136, 138
Rosso, 42
Roumain, Jacques, 183
Roy, Evelyn, 38–9
Roy, Manabendranath Bhatacharya (M.N.), 21, 22, 23, 34, 38, 42, 46, 79, 150, 162 (biog.)
Russian Revolution, 2, 3, 7, 14, 16, 22, 25, 54 (10th anniversary), 78, 85, 99
'Rustico', *see* Guralsky

Saco and Vanzetti, 29
Sala, 83, 98
Salgado, Plinio, 113
Sandino, Augusto C., 9, 52, 84, 153
Seaman, Frank, *see* Phillips, Charles
Second International, 7, 12, 14, 17, 66
Sectarianism, 23, 35, 47 (Mexico), 59, 60, 95–6 ('Latin Americanism'), 100
Serra, 26
Serrano, 40
Serrati, 21
Shapiro, Leonard, 18, 28
Sinani, G., 27, 162 (biog.), 189
Siqueiros, David Alfaro, 48, 54, 83–4, 101 ('red caudillo'), 163 (biog.), 184
Sobolev, A. I., 58
Socialist Party of Ecuador, 50–1, 102
Socialist Popular Party of Cuba, *see* CP of Cuba
Socialist Revolutionary Party of Colombia, 36
Socialist Workers Party of Chile, 46
South American Bureau, 31–3, 36, 59, 75
South American Secretariat, 27–30, 32, 44, 47, 50, 56–7, 59
Souvarine, Boris, 26, 34, 36
Soviet Union, 2, 7, 13, 14, 18, 21, 22 (position in world revolution), 25, 33–6 (diplomacy), 37, 86, 94–5 (relations with Great Britain), 98 (war against), 123, 131
Spain and the Civil War, 14, 36, 48, 53, 121
Stabilization, *see* World revolution
Stalin and Stalinism, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19 (periodization of world revolution), 20, 21, 23, 28, 31, 40, 47, 58, 60, 102, 112, 122, 131, 133, 135, 136, 138, 148, 150
Strakhov, *see* Chü, Chiu-pai
Svatek, Frantisek, 42

Teheran Conference, 135–6, 138, 140
Third Communist International, *see* Comintern Congresses
Thorez, 134

Tito, 8
Togliatti, 121
Torres (Argentina), 40
Torres Giraldo, Ignacio, 30
Travin, *see* Gusev, Sergei.
Treint, 82
Trotsky, Leon, 11, 15, 19, 26, 34
Trotskyists, 17, 21, 23 (on China), 62, 70
Trujillo, Rafael Leonidas, 53
Twenty-one conditions, 11, 33, 49

Underground activities, *see* Twenty-one conditions
Union Sacreé, 122, 135
USA, 2, 8, 23 (Negros), 24 (importance of), 53, 65, 68–75 *passim* (role in Latin America), 78, 81, 123, 129, 144–6, (Cuba), 130, 138–42 (Analysis of Browder)

Vidali, Vittorio, 163

Worker–peasant Blocks, 105
Working class, 1, 2 (in USA), 8 (in Nicaragua), 12, 13, 20 (Europe), 21 (colonial), 48, 68–9 (Latin America), 73, 74, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81 (in USA), 83, 84, 90, 99–106 (role in Latin American Revolution), 110, 116 (Brazil), 135, 136–7 (postwar), 144 (Cuba)
World revolution, 1, 3, 14–15, 18–20 (periodization), 20–4 (geography of), 55, 68, 75–96 *passim*, 86–8 (programme of), 122, 149–55 *passim* (failure of)
World War II, 2, 61, 138

Young Communist International (YCI), 27, 38, 56

Zamora, 186
Zetkin, Clara, 26
Zinoviev, 3, 15, 33, 77–8, 121

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